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MRS. BROWN
ON THE TICHBORNE DEFENCE.

BY

ARTHUR SKETCHLEY,
AUTHOR OF "THE BROWN PAPERS."

LONDON:
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PREFACE.

I'M sure the letters as I've 'ad over this 'cre Claimint, you'd think as I were 'is own mother, or the Lord Chancellor, at the werry least ; and, as I says, jest as if I can tell parties the way to get tattoo marks out ; or whether a child as weighed eight pounds at its birth was likely to grow into twenty-four stone ; or whether any one as 'ad a sun-stroke always forgot their French ; or if you was wrecked in the "Osprey," whether you mightn't come up in the "Beller;" or if your own mother knowed you, whether your aunt by the mother's side could forget you ; or if you had a little boy of your own, whether you'd like another little boy to 'ave the property afore 'im ; or if a real gentleman bred and born would take 'is oath as he were a gentleman, when all the time he were not, and knowed it ; or whether parties as come 'ome of a Christmas Day always went to Wappin' that same evenin' ; and whether soda and brandy wouldn't take away your memory ; and if it's likely as a old soger would know a man at once

as he 'adn't never see in 'is life afore ; and why he shouldn't 'ave the estates when he wants 'em as bad as anybody ; and why them as 'ave lent 'im money ain't to get it back, as they never will, if he don't get the property.

So I says to Brown, " I did ought to have Friar Bacon's brazen 'ead to anser sich a lot of questions, for 'owever am I to know all about sich things ? "

He says, " You take my adwice and keep quiet over it."

I says, " That's wot I wants to, and would with pleasure, but for Mrs. Flintorf, as is of the German persuasion, thro' 'er father 'avin' been a Dutch corn-cutter as dealt in picters and died wealthy, only 'er 'usband would go into petroleum as he burnt 'is fingers with ; and nasty stuff, too, in my opinion, every way.

" Well, she'd been and laid out over a pound in these 'ere Tichbung bonds, as she says to me must come out right, cos, if he ain't the real man, the family 'll take 'em up thro' not a likin' their name orked about like that."

" Well, then," I says, " the family will be a great fool if they does. Why, you might as well expect me to pay that there shillin' as the feller tried to get as spread the report of me bein' dead."

" Well," she says, " I shall consider it be'avin' worry unlike a lady if the young widder don't pay

them bonds ; 'cos 'ow was we to know as he wasn't the real man when he said so ? ”

So I see it weren't no use a-talkin' to 'er, cos beat 'er on one pint, and she'd fly off to another, and then say there was parties as 'ad see 'im, and some as 'ad dined with 'im, and never 'ad smoked sich a segar, nor 'ad a better glass of wine.

“ Ah,” I says, “ that's all very fine, but we knows the nearest way to the 'uman 'art is down the throat, as the sayin' is, and the best way for to make a man your friend is to let 'im put 'is 'and into your pocket ; but,” I says, “ it won't wash, as can't buy up judge and jury 'ere as you can in some parts ; and all as I've got to say is, as let 'im 'ave 'is trial, and then I'll speak out ; but I ain't a-goin' to bother the judge, nor yet worret the jury, till I sees 'im in the docks.”

“ But,” says Mrs. Flintorf, “ you've got that weight with you, Mrs. Brown, as a word from you might do a deal.”

I see she were a-comin' the carney over me, so I says, “ Preaps I 'ave weight, and preaps I 'ave not, jest the same as Queen Wictoria 'erself, but neither on us wouldn't think of interferin' with a judge and jury, tho' in course she could send the lot to the Tower, if she thought they was comin' any of their larks, as she don't allow in business 'ours ; and I 'ave 'eard say if the Prince of Wales

'issel was to yawn when a-settin' with 'er in the Cabinet, she'd say to 'im, 'Your Royal 'Ighness'—for she's always up to the knocker in manners—'ad better keep your yawns for your equals, and not go a-openin' of your royal mouth like that afore your royal ma.' "

Not as she bothers 'im much about busyness, and right, too, arter sich a illness, as he must 'ave a downright British constitution to 'ave shook off, tho' it did age 'im certingly when first I see 'im out agin.

So I give Mrs. Flintorf an 'int as I weren't a-goin' to take no steps over it, as any one might throw in my teeth arter, tho' I shall certingly keep my links eye on 'im all the way thro', cos tho' I foller'd 'im up pretty close the last days down at Westminster, to the werry gates of Noogate, where he'd be now if they 'adn't been and bailed 'im out; not as ever I shall forgive 'im for some things, and would tell 'im to 'is face, if he was all the barrernites as ever was born, wot I thought on 'im, only it would be a forestallin' of the ends of justice.

Wot puts me out is parties a-bein' that positive over it, like Mrs. Whelpton, as is down your throat if ever you looks as tho' you didn't take it all in like gospil, as is wot I never will do arter readin' as I 'ave about changin' of infants under the month, and sometimes up to six months, as makes more difficult, in course, cos any one as washes and

dresses 'em must know their marks, the same as I could swear to Sam Medley, tho' he must be over thirty now, as I took from before the month, thro' 'is mother a-dyin', and 'ave got five moles as I could swear to now, as he can't never 'ave set eyes on 'isself, and preaps ain't aware on; so it wouldn't do for 'im to turn up a Claimint as long as I'm alive.

But, bless your 'art, why, there's some as 'ave been that steeped in walnut juice by gipsies, as there ain't a bit of their nat'ral colour left on their bodies; as I've 'eard 'appened to a party as was stole out of 'is cradle, and tho' they got 'im back, never 'ad no complexion to speak on, and all 'is children was reg'lar copper colour, tho' some say that were thro' 'im a-marryin' a lady from the West Injes as were the colour of treacle, and a 'ead like a sheep's back for wooliness.

But, law, there's no tellin' by that, for I'm sure Mrs. Manders' fust were a downright Albeenio, with white 'air and pink eyes, while 'er and 'er 'usband were both arf casts.

In course, time will show who is who; and there's many a impostor as 'ave been brought to light afore now; but yet nobody didn't ought to be browbeat, as the sayin' is, but 'ave a fair 'earin', even as big a liar as ever lived, and then if you ketches them a-trippin', serve 'em out, I say, with the cat-o'-nine-tails, as is wot I 'ope they will do.

I've got a nice load on my back, wot with one

and the other, as some 'ave betted money over 'im as they 'opes to win, and others 'as lent money as they 'opes to get back ; and then in course there's 'is wife's family, as in course is all ladies and gentlemen, they're worry anxious for 'im to be the right man, as would be a orful drop to come down to bein' plain missus arter bein' my lady.

Not as either 'im or 'er cares about the size of the drop so as they gets it, and only considers the rights for the children, for they do say as she ain't no more pride about 'er than 'im, and would jest as soon go to Woppin as anywherees else ; and be quite at 'ome there, as shows as she knows 'er place.

But where the money comes from puzzles me, cos we knows he can't 'ave nothink, thro' bein' a bankrupt, as is a thing as may 'appen to any one, and 'ave to a real dook afore now, as a deal 'igher than a Claimint ; but then 'is wife were as rich as Creases, as the sayin' is, thro' bein' some nobleman's dorter, as is nat'ral to a dook to marry.

And there's many a crowned 'ead as 'ave come to grief thro' a-fallin' off their thrones, as is their constant 'abits in France.

But, law ! there's some on 'em a deal better off a-livin' over 'ere in fine 'ouses, with all their luxuries and sweets about 'em, as can go about and amuse theirselves, and no fear of no riverlution a-turnin' on 'em out, as would suit me a deal better than the

gillonteen a-'angin' over my 'ead constant, or yet bein' dragged out of my bed to be shot like a dog, the same as that archbishop were, as is werry different to the Archbishop of Canterbury, though he's dreadful put out with the smoke over in Lambeth, and 'ave got 'is trials, poor man, like the rest on us ; but wot does he care, as long as he've got the poor to look arter ? and I'm sure if ever he looks out of 'is back winders he's got nothink else to look afore or arter, as they do say were once a lovely pallis, with gardens and fields jest like wot the Bishop of London 'ave got at Fulham, but some'ow or other they've been and built soap-bilers, and glue-melters, and bone-burners all about, as I've 'eard Brown say as was some of them old archbishops' doin's, as sold the land and sacked the money ; as is 'ard on them as comes to it now, and that's why I'm told as nobody wouldn't be made a bishop only but for Queen Wictoria's orders, as could send 'em to the Tower for refusin', as declares solemn as they won't be bishops up to the werry last, till in course they're obliged to give in when Queen Wictoria speaks, tho' a many says as she prefers the Scotch persuasion, as ain't got no bishops and did used to make short work of 'em, for I've see a picter myself of a lot of them Scotch a-killin' of a poor old bishop as they'd been and dragged out of 'is carridge as he were a-takin' of a-airin' along with 'is dorter.

But that was in days gone by as they did sich things here ; but the French ain't got over them bad ways, as I've 'eard say as Grabidaldi wants 'em to kill all the priests as well ; not as it matters wot he wants, for they've been and dried 'im up pretty well, a old waggerbone.

But I'm sure, talkin' of Claimints a-turnin' up, I never were more took a-back than when I were a-settin' a-readin' the paper one Sunday arternoon, and a werry nice dressed party called in on me, and says as a lady 'ad sent 'er for to inquire arter me, as 'ad been livin' abroad for years, and under a many obligations to me.

I couldn't think wot she meant till she told me the name, as I remembered all about in a minnit, as 'appened when I took to lettin' lodgin's, thro' bein' bad off.

Yes, we certainly was werry bad off that time, for Brown 'ad put 'is 'and to a bill, as is a thing no one didn't ought to do as ain't prepared for to pay the money, as is the same thing ; for well I knew poor Mrs. Worksop, as was a 'ard-workin' woman, tho' a widow, as let lodgin's to them medical students over agin the Middlesex Hospital, as is a wild lot and bad pay ; if she didn't go and sign 'er name for 'er brother-in-law, and 'ad the bed took from under 'er, as the sayin' is.

So I took to lettin' lodgins, and when once I

got in the swim, as the sayin' is, made it anser werry well, tho' I never shan't forget one party as were confined in my 'ouse, and went off a-leavin' of the infant in my charge, as throve wonderful on baked flower, but must say as I did get uneasy in my mind when six months went over my 'ead and no signs of the parents, for fear as it should turn out the case of only a fondling arter all, but turned up at last all right in a 'Ansom cab, and carried 'im off, a-payin' 'ansome likewise, and never rote nor nothink, as I did feel 'urt over, till years rolled by and I quite forgot it, till that Sunday as took me quite aback and stared at the party as if she'd got nine 'eads, when she begun to talk that friendly tho' quite unbeknown.

And if this 'ere party as called on me weren't from the grandmother as lived abroad, and sent me a 'andsome brooch and earrings, and I never 'ave mentioned no names over that story ; but if ever there should be any dispute about that infant, I knows I could swear to 'im like one of my own, and so I would this Claimint if I'd brought 'im up by 'and, as is a deal of trouble, but only wants care ; so that's why I'm always that interested in fondlin's, and likes to see 'em 'ave their rights, tho' they may be growed out of knowledge, as is the way with some young people as is up to your shoulder before you knows where your are.

MRS. BROWN ON THE TICHBORNE DEFENCE.

I SAYS to Brown, "This 'ere Claimint is a-goin' on it nicely, and a fine figgered man as ever were seen, partikler from the shoulders up'ards, as must 'ave his 'ead put on the right way, as the sayin is."

Says Brown, "Bother the Claimint ! I'm tired on 'im."

"Ah !" I says, "that's wot a many says, but not them as 'ave dined with 'im, as 'is dinners is quite up to the knocker, I'm told ; and there's a many as didn't know 'im from Adam afore dinner, as the sayin is, come to be certing about 'is indemnity afore they'd done their fust segar, as he smokes the werry finest, with the best of everythink ; and I 'eard one party say myself as he'd go to the block to prove 'im to be the man, as shows as there is parties as will stick at nothink.

"Certingly it's werry wonderful as real live Members of Parlyment should come for'ard as ain't got no interests in 'im beyond preaps a five-pound note

as they've been and laid over it; eos it ain't likely as they've got 'is bonds, as I bought one myself in the Strand for a penny, and shall most eertingly claim my thousand pounds the werry moment as he gets the property, as will be a werry pretty thing."

"Yes," says Brown, "when you gets it; but that ain't no reason, Martha, why you should go about a-sayin' as you're sure he's the man."

I says, "Mr. Brown, do you think as you've been a-'oldin' to your 'art all these years any one as would take and purger 'erself like that, as wouldn't be a fit wife for you?"

He says, "No, old gal, I don't believe as you would; but," he says, "in my opinion there's some as is only a-goin' for wot they can get baek of their losses."

"Well," I says, "for my part, I looks on that penny as throwed away the moment I'd give it for that there bond, and so I should if it 'ad been a thousand pounds."

"And serve you right, too," says Brown; "and I wish as all them as 'ave got money in it may burn their fingers;" and out he goes to 'is elub.

I eouldn't 'elp 'avin' of a good think over that penny a-turnin' out a thousand pounds, tho' not likely, as eertingly I should like, not only for bein' a pretty sum to leave behind, but sueh a surprise to them as 'ave jeered over that bond, the same as

Mrs. Cudlip, as give me the false'ood direct, in sayin' as it wasn't no proof in 'avin' run to flesh, tho' I know'd it wasn't, for I was a reg'lar wisp once myself; and as to forgettin' French, why, I don't believe as I could do more than say *wee* now, if they was to offer to make me Queen of France on the spot, tho' once I did used speak fluent like, in callin' for a *petty ware*, or anythink like that, quite nat'ral, as is words I never forgets, for fear of suddin illness in the night, or even a railway axcidence, as brandy 'ave saved many a life, as I will 'old agin all the teatotallers in the world, as they'd fly to themselves, drawn double with spavins, for life is sweet, as the sayin' is.

I certingly did not give my mind much to that there Claimint, thro' Mrs. Padwick bein' nearly dead with the gallstones, as took 'er sudden in the night, and they fetched me all of a 'urry, and jest in time to save 'er life; for if that gal of 'ern weren't a-goin' to give a dose of opidildoc, as she'd sent her for in the evenin', to rub in at bed-time, thro' a-complainin' of pains between the shoulders all the arternoon, as is always a sign of bile, in my opinion.

She wasn't out of bed for three weeks, and then only on the sofy to tea on Sunday evenin', as Brown and me took tea with 'er, thro' 'im 'avin' come up from Brummagem by the early train.

Well, he were a-tellin' us about seein' the Claimint at one place, and 'ow he'd been and told a party wot he thought of them a-goin' on like that.

"Well," I says, "Brown, you must allow as he's a fine man."

Says Brown to me, "Why, you talks about a fine figger as if you'd ever see 'im."

"Well," I says, "he 'ave been pointed out to me in court, tho' the crowd were that great as I couldn't see over their 'eads, not on my tiptoes, but felt sure as I should know 'im among a thousand, thro' pieters, let alone Madame Tussor's, as there he is as large as life, and twice as nat'ral, as the sayin' is, with all them other kings and queens a-lookin' like flesh and blood, and real 'airs, and the clothes as they was 'ung in, the same as the Mannins in the Chamber of 'Orrers, as is next room to where old Bonyparty is a-layin' dead in 'is bed with the Dook of Wellington a-gloatin' over 'im, as were mean, I considers, tho' merry nat'ral, the same as a lion over 'is pray."

Not as ever I shall 'old with wars myself, thro' once a-seein' a prize-fight in Battersea Fields when quite a gal, as set me agin fightin' for life; not but wot I should like for to see a set-to 'twixt them kings as goes to war, cos then they might punch one another's 'eads, and 'ave settled

it without no more bloodshed than their own noses.

“Well, as I were a-sayin’, I’m sure I’ve read about that Claimint, wrote about ‘im, and dreamt about ‘im, till I seems like a mother to ‘im.”

“Now,” says Brown, “do drop ‘im, that’s a good soul—any’ow, till ‘is trial comes on.”

“No,” I says, “Brown, I will foller ‘im up, cos I don’t ‘old with parties a-listenin’ to wot others says, and wants to make up my mind, as not no judge nor jury would change if I thinks he’s the right man, jest the same as Queen Wictoria would, or any other man.”

Says Brown, “It certingly are a staggerer the way as parties goes on a-oorayin’ wherever he goes.”

“Yes,” I says, “and partikler in them parts where he never was in ‘is life afore, so, in course, can’t ‘ave no interests in ‘im ; and, in course, if he ain’t Orton, he must be somebody, and that Lord didn’t ought to ‘ave said as he’d been and tattooed ‘im if he never didn’t, partikler as parties as ‘ad see ‘im a-bathin’ never found it out ; but, then, ‘owever should they under water, and partikler in one of them French bathin’-gownds, as is down to your ‘rists and ancles, and merry proper too when ‘ole fam’lies goes out a-bathin’ together, and all their friends ; as I’ve see ‘em myself.”

"Well," says Brown, "'ow did you get on in the Ile of Wight, as you was a-goin' to that same Saturday as I went to Brummagem?"

"Oh!" I says, "pretty well, tho' I'm sure it's a wonder as I didn't get my death, and preaps ain't 'eard the end on it now, leastways the feller were werry violent, and all for nothink, as you may say."

"Why, wot was the row?" says Brown; and I see 'im tip Mrs. Padwick the wink, as he's welcome to do, thro' me not bein' a jealous dispersion, and 'er like my own sister, tho' give to larf at me.

So I says, "There's no occasions for no winks, Mr. Brown, cos any one may make a mistake, and I ain't ashamed on it, and would own to it afore Queen Wictoria 'erself, as, bein' a lady, might make a mistake 'erself, the same as Mrs. Brimble did, as come behind a total stranger at the Cristshull Pallis, and give 'im a pinch, a-thinkin' as it were Brimble, as couldn't 'ave been no gentleman to use sich lang-widge over a pinch, as wouldn't matter if it turned black in a man as never wears short sleeves; and it's werry easy to take one man's back for another, partikler with the same coloured coat, as nearly all dresses alike, and both bein' lusty and grey 'air, why, 'owever could she tell? Not but wot I thinks as all them practical jokes and pinchin's is best left alone, whether it's your own 'usband or anybody's else's as you pinches."

But, law ! there's no tellin' who is who in this world ; for I'm sure I could 'ave swore it were that Claimant as I travelled down to the Ile of Wight with that time from Saturday till Tuesday, thro' a return-ticket, as is a great conwenience, and got into the same carriage with 'im at Waterloo.

I see as he didn't want to be noticed, by the way as he got into that carriage, a-standin' for ever so long on the step, a-lookin' round, arter 'avin' put 'is things in for to secure a corner with 'is face to the injin, as I'd took the oppersite one thro' not a-wishin' to meet the wind with a black in my eye, as is sometimes werry troublesome, partikler when a cinder, and your bonnet 'arf blowed off.

I see as he didn't mean no conwersation from the fust, thro' a-buyin' a lot of noosepapers and things as he 'olleder to the paper-boy for, as were all 'is art jest to take off anyone's attention.

I never said a word, but, when we started, I give 'im one of my looks, as much as to say, "I can keep anythink dark with the best."

Well, he never spoke a word, not even when he fell asleep, arter readin' nearly 'arf-way, and then I see by 'is breathin' as he were a free liver, let alone the pulls as he'd took out of a case-bottle, as I could see were sperrits.

Not as I looked at 'im over 'is drains, but pur-tended for to admire the prospect, and talked to a

lady with a infant as were next me, for fear as he should think it a dooty for to say, "Will you 'ave a sip, mum?" as were aperient the last of 'is thoughts.

When he was off, I says to the lady next me, I says, "If we was all as rich as he might be, we should 'ave our thousands where we 'aven't got 'undreds."

"Ah!" she says, "that's true, that is."

I says, "You knows 'im, then?"

She says, "My 'usband does, and that's why he wouldn't come in this same carridge, cos he wouldn't 'ave kep' 'is temper, and 'ave told 'im wot he thought on 'im."

I says, "Bless you, he don't mind that. Why," I says, "look 'ow he stood wot that Turney-Gen'ral said to 'im. Why, he was a lamb."

"Ah!" she says, "he's used to lambs, he is;" and busts out a-larfin', as woke 'im up; but he only took a pull at 'is licker, and went off agin.

I says, "A man as ain't got a clear conshence couldn't never sleep like that, I should say."

She says, "Conshence! He's got no more conshonce than a nutmeg-grater."

I says, "I calls that 'ard."

She says, "You ask my 'usband about 'im, as married 'is own sister-in-law's 'arf-brother's widder."

“ Wot,” I says, “ over in Horsetralier ? ”

“ No,” she says, “ down in Woppin’ ”

“ Lor ! ” I says, “ you don’t say so ? ” I thinks to myself, why, she must be a relation ; so says to ‘er, “ Why, then he’s a bigger biggymarian than even the Turney Gen’ral can make out ? ”

She says, “ He knows ‘ow to manage a turner gen’ral, for ‘is father were a ivory turner, as is almost the same thing.”

“ Well, then,” I says, “ if you knows that, why not say it, as would save a deal of trouble ? ”

She says, “ I shall when the trial comes.”

“ Ah ! ” I says, “ it will last for years, some say.”

“ Then,” she says, “ we shall be in our graves, or the work’us, as is the same thing ; for,” she says, “ I’d as soon be berried as eat ‘orses’ fat made into butter.”

“ Ah ! ” I says, “ and nice beasts them Germins must be for to make up such filth, as no doubt that old Beastmark is in it, as would be glad if he could pison us all, and then he could come and take us all prisoners to-morrow.”

“ Oh ! ” she says, “ wot a willin ! ”

“ Law ! ” I says, “ all is fair in love and war, as the sayin’ is ; not as he loves us ; and as to war, he dursn’t do it, not so long as the wolutineers is about, with the Ortum manuvers all over the place, and the Dook of Cambridge at their ‘ead.”

She says, "I'm sure we live in orful times, wot with the price of meat, and coals gone up that 'igh as goodness knows whenever we shall see 'em down agin."

I says, "When, indeed? not as ever I can believe as the meat did ought to be the price it is; and it's all nonsense a-talkin' about the strikes, cos we knows werry well as them poor dumb animals can't strike, as I often wish they could when I sees 'em a-bein' drove and 'it about that shameful, as some seems to take a pleasure in, as even little children will jine in a-drivin' of a poor 'armless sheep to death, as is a sight I can't a-bear, tho' no one ain't more partial to a leg of mutton than myself; but that's a werry different thing."

In course there's a deal of cant about that cruelty to animals, as a many only makes a row about cos it's their livin', like a lot more of them societies, as in course is only got up for a job, and a fine fortin made out of 'em; as Brown always says as the printers and paper makers is the parties as gets most benefit out of all them tracts as is sent to the 'eathens, as can't read 'em, and wouldn't if they could.

Then there's secretaries, and agents all over the world, and all manner like that, as all gets a pull out of them 'eathens, and old ladies a-dyin' and leavin' their leggisies to all them societies, as must 'ave a jolly larf over it among theirselves, and gets a good

livin' out of it, cos when they comes to live, with their wives and children, it must make a pretty good 'ole in the money afore the 'eathens and the other dumb animals gets any good.

But, law, in course every one must live, and them as can't or won't work must get their bread by cadgin', as is wot lots lives by in London ; so in course this 'ere Claimint must stick up for 'is rights, or else wherever would he be ?

Well, he'd been and slep beautiful, like a infant with a clear conshence, all but 'is snores, as was 'eavy, thro' 'is corpilence, and that lady a-goin' on about 'im, a-tellin' me 'ow he'd been the ruin of thousan's, and would be agin if they'd let 'im.

So I says, " Well, I do think, as you knows so much about 'im, why, you might save every one a deal of trouble, let alone espense, if you'd jest drop on to 'im."

She says, " You wait for Nowember, and see if he don't see the inside of Newgit."

Well, jest then the train stopped, and we all got out, and was 'uddled into a train as took us aboard the steamer, leastways down to the water's edge ; and in the confusion I lost sight of that lady, as I think 'er good gentleman must 'ave picked 'er up.

It give me a bit of a turn, a-goin' to sea like that, without nothink left to take agin sea-sickness ; for I never can be in a railway without jest a toothful,

and I'd give that lady with the infant best part of what I'd brought, thro' a-bein' werry low over that Claimint, poor thing, and shed tears about 'is ways close agin Portsmouth.

There was that Claimint aboard the steamcr, a-rollin' about the deck as if he'd been Lord Nelson 'issel come to life agin in the harms of victory, as I've been aboard the wessel myself as he were shot on the 'ind quarter-deck, and see the werry spot as he fell on at Spithead, with a brass plate over it for to mark it, as were a 'ero in 'is ways, no doubt, the same as them anshent Romans; not as I 'olds with them, as is why every onc 'ates them Jesuists, thro' bein' Roman theirselves to the backbone, as that old Beastmark knows will be too many for 'im some day, 'cos they always 'ave conkered the world like Julier Seizer; not but them Prooshuns is the Seizers with a wengeance, as the sayin' is, if you comes to that, as I'm glad the French 'ave begun to pay 'em off, and will do it some day altogether, tho' they didn't ought to talk so mueh about it till it's done.

I don't think as ever I were more put out in my life than when we got safe to the other side, as is the Ile of Wight, as they put us on another tramway, and off we goes, and a-knowin' as it were a small place, I thought as pre'aps a tramway would take you all over it in 'arf a 'our; but, bless you, no; they only took us to a station as they called Shanklin, and then kep'

us a-waitin' there nearly two 'ours cos we jest missed a train as wouldn't wait for us, tho' they made us wait for the next boat ever so long; and I never got to Wentnor, were I was a-goin' to stop with Mrs. Portlock for a day or two, as lets lodgin's there in the season, and I knowed would stop supper for me if it was midnight.

We got to Wentnor at last, and 'er boy Tommy met me at the station to carry my carpet-bag, and said it were only a step, and he'd show me a short cut.

I've 'eard speak of 'ills, and 'ave see a few in my time, both Richmond and Greenwich, but as to Wentnor, it's full of mountains, and the rate as that boy walked at, and the loose stones as I trod on, nearly sent me a-flyin' 'ead fast; and as I knowed the sea-side was close at 'and, I were afeard if my foot slipped as I might roll into the oshun wave.

I was reg'lar done when I got to Mrs. Portlock's, as is a old friend, thro' certainly not a new face, as the sayin' is, for I never did see a plainer ooman, as she says were a burn, but in my opinion were born so, as some is, and no consequence if the 'eart's in the right place, as the sayin' is.

I couldn't 'ardly sleep for tiredness, and dreamnt orful of that therc Claimint, for I'd been a-tellin' Mrs. Portlock 'ow I'd travelled down with 'im, as said she'd give 'er eyes to see 'im, and I thinks to

myself and no great loss neither, lookin' at 'em as ornymnts, as is wot they are not.

Well, I dreamt as he come and set on my bedside and shook 'is fist at me and said, "I ain't your mother."

I says, "I never said you was, as is the opposite sect;" but, I says, "take your 'and off my chest," and I says "I don't want nothink out of your bottle as 'ave got one of my own." I says, "Take it away," for I thought he was a-'oldin' it to my mouth, and give 'im such a slap on the face, as proved to be poor Mrs. Portlock as 'ad been disturbed with my groans and come to see wot were the matter with me, as must 'ave been the nightmare, thro' bein' in a double-bedded room, as she took the tent and give me the four-poster, thro' 'avin' of the white washers in 'er own room and didn't like to put me off, 'as 'ad been comin' to see 'er over three years, and didn't want me to be a-overangin' 'er any longer, thro' not bein' one as can't bear no suspense any more than me, as is 'orrible and wuss than death itself, as the sayin' is.

I were that knocked [up as didn't 'ardly move over the door till Sunday evenin', for them up-'ill places don't suit me, and you can't get down to the sea at Ventnor without a-goin' over a regular pressy-pitch, and I think as the change of air 'ad been too sudden for me, and 'ad give me that nightmare, cos

I didn't take nothink for supper only a bit of cold roast pork and pickled salmon, with a cowcumber and bottled stout, thro' bein' nearly famished, as can't 'urt no one when it's all 'olesome and good, with a little somethink 'ot afore goin' to bed ; but some 'ow I did not 'ave a good night, as were all owin' to 'avin' met that Claimint in the train.

So I kep' quiet all day Sunday and most of Monday, till we took a walk in the evenin' just to see the sea, not as I cared much for it thro' 'avin' ad plenty on it in my time and preaps a little too much, but 'ad a very pleasant time along with Mrs. Portlock, as is wonderful company, and can tell you about more murders 'and orrrers than ever I 'eard on, and knowed them parties as murdered Unt and Thurkell, in the Edgware Road, and were in the cottage the werry night as it were done, when a gal, and see 'em drag the body thro' the pond in a sack for to berry it in the field, never a-guessin' it were a copse, as was all 'ung, and serve 'em right, excep' the one as turned King's evidence, but couldn't rest, so took and stole a 'orse in the name of Probert, and got 'isself 'ung just to be put out of 'is misery ; as they do say were the wust of the lot, and certainly I do not 'old with 'im a-roundin' on the others.

In course a common informer is a mean character, but I do wish as there was some on 'em about now for to inform agin them waggerbones as drives that

furous round the corners with no names on the carts, with your life in danger every instant.

I certainly were sorry for to leave that Ile of Wight, jest the same as Robinson Cruiser were to leave that unin'abited island, as tho' lonesome must 'ave been a quiet life, with no naybours to come in a-borrerin' of things, and takin' away your character till you 'aven't got a flat-iron to use, and accused of drinkin' behind your baek, tho' you could easy turn round on them as says it, and prove the pot-boy there three times a-day, and generally with a bottle of sperrits, not ineludin' the supper beer and wot the gal fetches arter dark, or takes in under 'er apron, as is low ways, cos as for my part I likes everythink open and above board myself, as the sayin' is, and as to Mrs. Grimley, 'er nose tells a tale, and in course there may be a excuse for 'im, for that wood-cuttin' must be dry work as he's a-settin' at from night till mornin'; but as to 'er she's 'arf 'er time a-gossipin' over the palins of the baek-garden to that idle slut Mrs. Pownsby, as lets 'er children go about in rags, with 'er all the mornin' over some of the maggarzeens, as is all werry well, but 'ad far better be at the wash tub than let 'er 'usband be a-cleanin' of 'is pigeons of a Sunday mornin' when he don't take the dogs out, in a shirt as would disgrace a workin' sweep.

Not as ever I makes a remark, leastways never

did used to when I lived near such, as the rents was low, and convenient 'ouses with a copper in the washus as is a thing as you don't meet with always, not even in a nobleman's 'ouse.

I'm sure it wasn't thro' me as Mrs. Pritchard's 'usband give 'er a black eye thro' comin' 'ome and findin' 'er on the bed in licker afore one o'clock, tho' I certingly say to 'er sister-in-law, as were Mrs. Grimley, as I'd see 'er go into the "Black Lion" the back way seven times that werry mornin', as met Pritchard and told 'im as he would find no dinner ready, and true 'er words proved, for there wasn't even a bit of fire, with the bit of steak a-layin' raw on the dresser, and he didn't never take but 'arf a 'our, poor feller, and died of dropsy 'issel thro' the liver complaint, with both 'is legs twice the size of my body, but they do say were one to lap 'issel on the quiet, as will find you out and 'ave you on the 'ip sooner or later.

That's the reason as I like a island thro' bein' surrounded by water, and can keep yourself to yourself, the same as Mrs. Portlock, as won't spak to a naybour as she 'ates the 'ole lot, as is only self preservation, as will underlet you and try to 'tice your servant away and give out as your 'ouse ain't 'olesome thro' the drains, or else a-swarmin' with wermin as is werry 'ard to bear, when a-lookin' to lodgers for to live upon, but it's the way of the world, whether it's a

island or not, and that's why Queen Wictoria lives on it, thro' 'er 'eart a-bein' in the 'islands, as the sayin' is, so in course likes it cos of its bein' a island like Seotland.

I should 'ave went to see Osbin, as is Queen Wietoria's mareen residence, as they calls it, not as I ean think why, for I'm sure she can't 'ave no mareen stores there, as is only old rags and bottles, with rusty keys and sieh like, with a black doll a-hangin' out by the 'air of 'er 'ead as is a sign of the savidge, not but wot Queen Wietoria's rag-bag must be worth havin' with all 'er old corrynation robes tore up in it, besides lots of things as ain't in course no use to 'er, but would come in 'andy to many a family as wants to eut a figger in the world, if it was only 'er left-off gloves.

Not as I should care about sich things myself but should like some of 'er old gownds for the sake of the pattern, let alone the style, not as I should take the liberty of wearin' anythink of 'ern without alterin', tho' bein' somethink of the same figger and might be took for 'er, and 'ave them sentinels a-presentin' of their arms at me a-walkin' past White-hall, or the Orse Guards turn out all over the place, let alone the crowds a-starin' under my bonnet, as was like wot they did when that there Markiss of Lorne took and walked up Regent Street with 'is royal bride on 'is arm, and were that mobbed as they 'ad

to jump into a hansom, so as not to be wisible to the wulgar gaze, as the sayin' is, as comes of marryin' a princess out of your own station.

But thro' my ticket a-bein' up of the Toosday I were obligated for to go, and Mrs. Portlock said as she'd go over early with me to the steamer for the sake of the ride.

We went up to the railway by the bus as is at the top of the 'ill at Wentnor, and it's my opinion as that bus took us 'arf round the highland.

We soon got to the place as is called Ryde, and a werry pleasant ride it is; and took a early cup of tea along with a friend of Mrs. Portlock's, with the finest srimps as I've see for many a day; and a fine view from 'er back parler winder, as looks into the sea, all over a corn-field.

Arter as we'd set a-enjoyin' of ourselves a good bit, it were time for me to go, and Mrs. Portlock and 'er friend, as is Mrs. Belper, thro' bein' a skipper's widder, they walked with me to the end of the pier, as I shouldn't 'ave done if I'd thought of it's bein' that long, and my arm pretty nigh come out of its socket with carryin' my bag, as I do believe it would if it 'adn't been as a porter met me 'arf way, and took it for me aboard the boat.

Jest as we got to the place where the boat were a-standin', who should I see but the Claimint.

So I says to Mrs. Portlock, "There he is!"

She says, "Who?"

I says, "Why, the Claimint, to be sure."

She says, "Let me 'avc a good look at 'im."

'Er friend and 'er goes close agin the rails as he was a-'angin' over, and looks in 'is face.

Well, that next moment we was off, so I 'adn't 'ardly time to say, "Good-bye," but I 'urries aboard the steamer, and that Claimint follers; and then there was a reg'lar shout from the pier, "Jest like Roger," "Go it, barrernite."

I see that man glare at 'em all, aboard and ashore, and he walks for'ard a-smokin', and I didn't see 'im any more, for I kep' out of 'is way, and, thro' a-feelin' the motion of the steamer, as made me feel all-overish, I shet my eyes tight close agin the ehimbley, and glad I were to get ashore.

There was a reg'lar crowd a-pushin' and a-drivin', and it were as much as I could do to get to the tramway, as took me to the train; so didn't pay no attention to the 'ollerin' and shoutin' as there were at the landin'-place.

I got to the station a good 'arf-'our afore the train started, and were a-settin' waitin' quiet, when who should come up but that Claimint, as looks round, and then comes at me full-butt, as the sayin' is.

I see he were in a reg'lar rage, and he says, "You old catamaran! I'll serve you out."

I says, "'Elp! Keep 'im off!" I says, "I ain't got your property, nor yet your titles. Leave me alone."

He says, "'Ow dare you go about a-sayin' as I'm the Claimint?"

I says, "Cos a lady as is your own sister-in-law's 'usband's wife told me so."

He says, "I see, by the way as you took to the suction a-comin' down, 'ow you'd be, as ain't sober yet."

I says, "It's false."

"Why," he says, "you and that other fieldmale was at it all the way."

I says, "Then you was a-watchin' us with your eyes shet, but," I says, "that ain't got nothink to do with your bein' the Claimint, and 'ere's the lady a-comin' up as told me you was."

There was a reg'lar crowd round us jest as that lady, as 'ad set by me a-comin' down, come up with 'er 'usband a-carryin' the babby.

So I says, "Step 'ere, mum, if you please, and speak up to prove as this 'ere is the Claimint."

I see as there was somethink wrong by the way as the parties looked ; and if that fieldmale didn't take and swear as she'd never said nothink of the sort.

"Why," I says, "you said as your 'usband and you would send 'im to Noogate."

That Claimint did turn on 'em, and I do think as there'd 'ave been a stand-up fight, if the bell 'adn't rung for the train, as made us all jump up; but there wasn't no pacifyin' that stout party, as said he were a carcase-butcher in the name of Ablewayte, and give 'is card to the inspector, and no more the Claimint than me; but swore as he'd 'ave the law on us all, and walked off, as led to dreadful words atween that lady and 'er 'usband, and then they both pitched into me, so I wouldn't stop in the same carriage with 'em, and so out I jumps, and said as I'd pay extra to go back fust-class.

While me and the porters was a-talkin' on the platform, the train was off; so they took and shoved me into a fust-class carriage 'ead fust, as I went in all a-sprawlin', slap into that stout man, as would 'ave pushed me out agin, a-sayin' I were a rcg'lar drunkin old toad, as it wasn't safe for any one to travl with, thro' not a-knowin' wot I might say next.

We was alone in the carriage, and he set a-glarin' at me till Winchester, as he got out at, and said he would ride no further with a woman as would swear any one's life away, and think no more on it than a dead dog.

I never was so 'urt in my life, and could 'ave shed tears over it, only I fell asleep, and never woke till tickets at Wox'all, whcre I 'ad to pay full fare for

changin' my class ; as I wouldn't 'ave paid but for their a-persecutin' me for ridin' in a carriage as I 'adn't no right to ; and if that fat man didn't say as I'd took and jumped into it jest as the train were in motion, as would be forty shillin's more, when he'd see me pushed in by them porters afore 'is werry eyes.

But in course he owed me a grudge, and wouldn't take no 'polergies, nor yet believe as I didn't do it out of spite, and said as 'is life were a reg'lar burdin to 'im thro' bein' took constant for that Claimint.

“ Well,” I says, “ there's some as would feel proud to be took for a real live barrernite.”

“ Ah ! ” says he, “ if you get me the property, I wouldn't mind wot you called me ; ” as makes me feel pretty sure as he were the Claimint arter all, cos I can take my solem Davy, as the sayin' is, as that party in the train a-goin' down spotted 'im like myself afore ever I took my little bottle out of my redicule, as proves we wasn't led away by drink, as he wanted to make out, and will 'ave the impidence to swear to in bringin' of 'is haction, as was 'is partin' words, with my name and address took down in a pocket-book.

“ Well,” says Brown, “ if he do bring 'is haction, I'll stand by you, old gal, cos I can see as you've been misled ; but,” says he, “ wotever you do, be careful of givin' your opinion over it.”

I says, "I ain't no opinion to give, for I'm that puzzled over it as I can't make it out whether he's the man, or whether he isn't ; and I don't believe as you can neither."

He says, "I knows wot my own opinion is, but that's my business ; and," he says, "as I'm a-goin' baek to Brummagem Thursday, I do 'ope as you'll keep your weather eye up, and not get into no troubles."

I says, "I'm sure I don't want to," and dropped that subjc all the time as Brown were in town, as 'is partin' words was, "Now don't go a-follerin' that Claimint about."

I says, "Mr. Brown, your lawful wife knows 'er place too well for to foller any man about ; but," I says, "all I wants to get at is, whether that party as I travelled down to the Ile of Wight with ain't 'im arter all."

"Well," he says, "take your own way ;" and off he goes.

When left to myself, I had a good think over it, a-feelin' as I did ought to find that feller out, with a haction a-'angin' over my 'ead, as is as bad as a law-soot any day, and that's why I must 'ave a good look at 'im, cos in course he might 'ave disguised 'issel self as a carcase butcher, the same as old Muchit, as were westry clerk somewheres out Essex way, as got 'is winders broke thro' a riot, over sendin' paupers into

the stone-yard, and escaped over the back garding wall in 'is wife's flannin gownd and night-cap, but were ketched in one of 'is own man-traps, and rode in a chair, like a live Guy Fox, all thro' the town by torchlight, and never 'eld up 'is 'ead agin, thro' bein' found out a-fingerin' the till, tho' a reg'lar chapel-goer, and one as went in for liberty, only carried them ideers too far for to please the ratepayers, and were cut down from 'is own bed-post, as he 'ung 'issel to with 'is braces that werry next Sunday mornin', but some say no more dead than I am, but gone off to Merryker, with a pauper out of the work'us berried for 'im.

In course I don't really care much about this 'ere Claimint, as ain't nothink to me ; yet I should like to know if it's 'im as I've took that interest in ; and no one can't 'elp a-feelin' a interest in any one as ain't got their rights, the same as that little nobleman as were 'ticed away from 'is 'ome by sweeps, as I've knowed some children take to wonderful myself, and get out of their little cots for to see 'em go up the chimbley, as is done away with now thro' not bein' lawful for to force no child up a narrer place like that ; not as there's any mortal chimbley livin' as they could get that there Claimint up, not if he were a-tryin' to fly for 'is life, even if he 'ad been brought up to be a sweep.

But as I were a-sayin', you never can tell who mightn't turn up, the same as that young nobleman,

as were a reg'lar swell, yet 'ticed away by them sweeps with a cake or a bit of 'ardbake, or somethink like that, as all children likes; and I once 'eard say as the Prince of Wales 'issel were werry much give to toffey, and no doubt Queen Wictoria 'erself 'ave 'eard speak of bulls'-eyes and alicumpane, tho' not things as I likes children to be a-messin' theirselves with constant, and I'm sure she wouldn't allow.

Well, that young swell would 'ave been a sweep all 'is life, and never 'ave been found out, only thro' 'im a-seein' of 'is ma's carridge one day a-stoppin' at a shop door as he were a-passiu' by, all over smuts, and in course no doubt knowed the footmen, and so were took 'ome at once, and lived for to be a nobleman, but never give up them sweeps' ways, and always 'ad 'em to spend the day with 'im the fust of May; and 'im and 'is ma would dance round the Jack-in-the-green like the rest of the family, and would enjoy for to be about sweeps to 'is dyin' day.

No doubt if this 'ere Claimint gets the day he'll go back to Australier and carry on them same games as he were so fond on when over there a boy.

I don't know as ever I should 'ave took 'im up no more, only when I sees real live lords and members of parlymint a-comin' for'ard with their thousan's, and what is better than money, good words, as you can't get every one to give you now-a-days, let alone a carridge to ride in, with ten pounds a week for

pocket money, and no doubt 'is good lady a livin' in style, like a lady as she is, and all them other ladies a-takin' of 'er up for to go to the opera along with 'em, and be soon a-goin' to eourt, as no doubt Queen Wictoria would like to sec the lot, the same as the Prince of Wales a-goin' to see that therc Grabidaldi, as I did not 'old with, and wouldn't 'ave let 'im if he'd bcen a son of mine, leastways should 'ave persuaded 'im, not a-'oldin' with keepin' a boy at 'ome by a-sendin' 'im to bed and loekin' up 'is clothes.

But as I were a-sayin', this 'ere Claimint 'ave go scores of friends ready to pay for 'im, and when one on 'em says he's as sure as he's the right man as he's alive, why, I thinks to myself and says as there must be a somethink in 'im.

Partikler as I 'eard a party say as he'd asked to dinner, and give 'em one fit for a prince to eat ; why, that don't look like a take-in do it ?

So that's why I says to myself tho' not a 'oldin' with them Merrykin ways of interwooin' of parties, as is like a bold intrusion, as the sayin' is. I thought as I should like for to ask that there member as 'ad stuck up for 'im a few questions, so goes down to the Parlyment 'ouses the werry day afore it broke up, and kep' a-'angin' about that 'ere entrance 'all, as they do say were built for a bedroom by one of them kings, as I certainly should like to have seen 'is parlour.

Well, I was a-standin' about a-lookin' on at them members a-comin' out, and 'eard parties a-pintin' out one arter the other on 'em, partikler them as is well beknown, and see Mr. Dizrcely, with 'is 'air a-curlin' beautiful, in a brown coat as is of the Ebreu Jew perswashun, tho' in course he don't own to it now, tho' a good many more on 'em 'ave got into Parlyment somc'ow, as they say money will do anythink in this world.

I must say I do believe as it will, for I'm sure the way as them dustmen went on about takin' away a few pea shells, and lettuce leaves, and lobster shells along with the dust from Mrs. Padwick, were downright abusc, as a sixpence made 'em all smiles over shovellin' of it out; not as ever I allows sich things in my dust'-ole, but that's the way with 'em Jews—pay 'em well and they'll do anythink for you.

I can't say as I thought much of that Parlyment as were a-breakin' up and is all brains no doubt, and no outside show; as is nothink but gingerbread after all.

So there I stood lookin' at 'em 'ard till I 'eard one say, "Here comes Wally, in a white 'at."

"Oh!" I says "he's the man for my money," so keeps my eye on 'im among the crowd, and follers arter 'im as quick as I could, tho' he got outside afore me, but only a minnit or two, and as luck

would 'ave it when I got outside that 'all there he was a-waitin' at the corner.

So I says, "It's a 'bus as he's a waitin' for, no doubt, as will get in with him myself, wherever he may be a-goin', as won't cost more than fourpence, at the werry outside."

So I pulls up and stood close behind 'im, a-knowin' of 'im agin by 'is white 'at, as always looks conspicerous in a crowd.

I think I must 'ave waited over a quarter of a 'our, lots of buses a-passin' all the time, but none on 'em seemed for to suit my gentleman, as stood there a-leanin' on the post.

I says, no doubt he's a-thinkin' wot he'll say agin the Pope next time as he ketches the speakers 'igh, as the sayin' is.

I kep' a-lookin' at 'im 'ard, a-sidlin' up close to 'im with a short corf now and then.

So at last he turns and says quite affable, "Can't meet with your bus, mum."

I says, "Not esactually, sir; tho' certingly a sultry evenin' with more thunder in the hair, I should say, as I can tell by my 'ead."

"Ah!" he says, "and jest the evenin' to relish a nice glass of ale."

I says, "And why not, if you knows the tap?"

He says, "There ain't a better tap in all London than this," a-pintin' to a 'ouse close by.

I says, "No doubt you knows, sir, thro' bein' used to the 'ouse."

He says, "I should think I did, as 'ave been on hand 'ere constant, always about day and night."

And I says, "Your dooty so to do, as I respects you for a-stickin' to the 'ouse, as you knows the rule well on, tho' I believe you 'ave been called to order."

He says, "I don't care 'ow much I'm called to order in a good cause, and will drink a glass of ale to your 'ealth with pleasure."

I says, "Sir, I should consider it a 'oner."

He didn't say another word but shoves open the door of the bottle entrance, and in he goes.

There wasn't nobody in that compartment, as were luck, for I felt all of a flutter like, so when he was served with a pint of Mild and Burton mixed, we set on a bench a-chattin' friendly.

So I says to 'im at last "Wotever do you think of this 'ere Claimint ?"

"Why," says he, "he's the right man; and wot's more shall 'ave 'is rights."

"Oh!" I says, "indeed, then I snpose you're a-goin' to make Parlyment take it up."

"Take it up," says he; "why, they must and shall."

I see he were in earnest, for lie were downright excited and took and finished off the ale at a gulp.

“ Well,” I says, “ in course, if you gents thinks so, it’ll soon be settled.”

He says, “ If I ’ad my way he shouldn’t be kep’ out another ’our.”

“ Well then,” I says, “ why ever not pass a act, a-sayin’ as he’s the right man, and that must settle it, the same as I remembers the ’ouse of Lords a-settin’ about who was the Lord Shoseberry, cos in course Parlyment can do anythink.”

“ Ah ! ” he says, “ and shall do it too,” cos he says “ we’re a-goin’ to ’ave a monster meetin’, as the Claimint will show ’imself at.”

“ Law ! ” I says, “ where ? ”

“ Oh ! ” he says, “ out the Commercial Road way.”

I says, “ A part as I knows well, and shall drop in to a dead certainty, not as I knowed he were considered a monster.”

He says, “ You’re one of the right sort, you are, and I must ’ave another glass with you,” so up he jumps and orders another pint, as I give ’im ’arf a-crown to pay for it, leastways I thought it were ’arf a-crown, but he said it were only a florin.

Well, I took another glass of ale, and all the time that there party kep’ a-tellin’ me ’ow that there Claimint knowed all the places where he ’adn’t never been in ’is life afore the moment he see ’em, and all ’is relations in a moment as he ’adn’t never seen neither,

and a lot on 'em dead and berried as he knowed the names on, and all manner like that, and 'ow as they 'ad found all them sailors as was wrecked along with 'im aboard of the "Beller;" as would 'ave turned up afore, only got washed ashore along the coast, just the same as any one bein' wrecked on the Goodwin Sands, one might be washed into Ramsgate and another into Margate, and go by different trains up to town, and so miss one another.

Well, while he was a-talkin' my eyes got that 'eavy as keep 'em open I couldn't, and at last reg'lar dropped off, tho' it didn't seem more than a minit 'ardly to me, when that party give me a shake, and says, "We don't allow no one sleepin' 'ere."

I says, "In course not, in the 'ouse of Parlyment."

He laughs, and says, "You're in our bottle department, old lady," as makes me look up, and if it wasn't the pot-boy, a-sayin' as I'd made the place ring agin with my snores.

So I jumps up, and says, "Wherever is Mr. Wally gone? and who have took my redicule?"

Says the lady at the bar, "Jem, fetch a perlice-man; she wants to make out as she've been robbed."

I says, "Oh! dear no! I'm sure as Mr. Wally is too much the gent, let alone bein' a member of Parlyment."

The pot-boy says, "Why, mother, you ain't got your right senses yet."

I says, “I ’ave, and knows werry well as I come in ’ere with Mr. Wally to take a glass of ale friendly, and talk the Claimint over, and he, no doubt, ’ave been obligated to go back into Parlyment: so jest send over for ’im.”

Says the landlady, “Send for a perliceman. I can’t ’ave this old loonytick a-makin’ a row ’ere.”

I says, “Send for Mr. Wally, as will see me righted, as ’ad over thirty shillin’s in my redicule, as some one ’ave been and took the lot.”

In come a perliceman jest then, as I told my story to ; and he busts out a-larfin’, and so did that pot-boy, when I said as Mr. Wally ’ad brought me in for a glass of ale, and the landlady she couldn’t ’ardly keep ’er countinunce, as said, “My good ooman, go ’ome.”

“Wot ?” I says, “and not enuf to pay my bus ? But,” I says, “never mind ! you’re paid for the ale, as I’m sure ’ad somethink in it, as reg’lar ’ocussed me, and tried it on a-ringin’ the changes over my ’arf-crown.”

Says the landlady, “You foul-mouthed old ’ussey ! I’ll give you in charge if you don’t go.”

The perliceman says, “Come ! step it, will you ?”

“Yes,” I says, “and over to the ’ouses of Parlyment, for to fetch Mr. Wally, and I’ll ’ave your licence took away for ’arbourin’ thieves ;” and out of the place I bounces, and ’urries over to Parlyment ;

but it were all over, and the perliceman on dooty says, "No 'ouse of a Wednesday night."

I says, "Oh! then Mr. Wally didn't come back 'ere?"

He says, "I ain't seen Mr. Wally 'ere to-day."

"Oh!" I says, "he wcre 'ere, for a party pinted 'im out to me, leastways to another party as I were standin' close to, and I followed 'im across the way, and got a-talkin' to 'im that friendly, thro' a-waitin' for a 'bus, so 'ad a glass of ale."

The perlice he give a reg'lar shout of larfture, as brought two more, as told me I'd been took in, for the real Mr. Wally were out of town.

"Well, then," I says, "I'll foller that feller to the world's end, as is a-goin' to a meetin' over that there Claimint, as did ought to be more partickler about 'is friends, and didn't ought to 'sociate with parties as passes theirselves off for other parties."

Says the perlice, "Did the party as you 'ad the ale along with say he were Mr. Wally?"

I says, "Not in so many words; but," I says, "any'ow he's a member of Parlyment, as I should know 'im ag'in anywhere by 'is white 'at."

"Ah!" says the perlice, "you're sure to spot 'im easy by that; but mind as you don't go about too mueh with sich characters, cos you'll get marked, as may bring you into trouble."

I give 'im a bend, not a-wishin' to be too free with no strangers, and off I walks ; and by the time I got to Edgware Road it were nearly nine o'clock, so jest in time for supper at Mrs. Padwick's.

But the way as Brown went on when he got 'ome the next day, and I told 'im over supper about me a-meetin' that there Mr. Wally, were a caution, as the sayin' is.

" Why," he says, "'aven't you see by the papers as he's down in 'Ampshire, a-speakin' for the Claimint ? "

" Well, then," I says, " he do know somethink about 'im ; so I ain't so far wrong in wishin' to speak to 'im."

" Yes," says Brown ; " but fancy you a-gettin' 'old of some cadger in the streets, and a-fancyin' as a member of Parlyment would let you treat 'im to ale ! Why it's out of reason ! "

I says, " I don't see that. At my time of life I can do a deal as would be for'ard in a gal. But," I says, " I'll 'ave that feller, if he's above ground."

Says Brown, " You'd better leave well alone."

I says, " Wot do you call well ? "

" Why," he says, " make the best of a bad bargain."

I says, " I'll make the wust on 'im as ever he knowed, a willin, for to pass 'isself off for a member of Parlyment, and then 'ocus me, and take my port-mony like that."

"Ah!" says Brown, "you never won't take warnin'."

I says, "I've done that afore now, tho' in gen'ral I 'ad to give it, for parties where I lived always wanted me to stop when it come to the pint."

Says Brown, "All as I've got to say is, if you will go a-blunderin' about, don't come a-'owlin' to me when you gets into trouble over this 'ere Claimint, that's all."

I says, "Don't you 'oller out till you're 'urt."

I see as Brown were a-gettin' a little shirty over it, so I changes the subjc to the thunder-storms, as Mr. Elpins, as lodges with Mrs. Padwick, said as he were glad as I'd 'ad sich a narrer escape as he'd read on in the papers.

I says, "Law bless you, I ain't been struck by no thunder-bolts."

"Oh!" he says, "I see it in the paper, as you was a-standin' at your winder, and was knocked back'ards."

"Ah!" I says, "that's where it is; there's lots of parties a-goin' about in the name of Brown, a-pretendin' as they're me; and if one on 'em 'ave been struck by lightnin', it may be a warnin' to 'em not to do it agin, as is goin' round and gettin' money under false pretences, as is not actin' open and above board on the square as the sayin' is, nor yet the act of a lady; leastways I don't consider it sich myself, and

would no more say as I was Mrs. Smith than Queen Victoria, with no more right to the crown than the man in the moon, unless it were given by Act of Parlyment, much the same as the Claimint might be if Wally 'ad 'is way."

Not as ever I will believc as that there little boy can be a Jesuist in disguise, tho' in course he might 'ave been born so, as they do say is everywheres about, and sometimes comes like a butcher's boy with a leg of mutton, a-lookin' as if butter wouldn't melt in 'is mouth, and always did think as the woman as come round with the milk were a man dressed up, as I'm pretty sure a party as I met with a beard and mustachc must 'ave been, in a omnibus, for all 'er chinyon and double skirts; so there's no tellin' 'ow they will disguise theirsclves, tho' certingly, when you comes to a infant in arms, that is carryin' deception too far, as I can't a-bear to see in children.

Not but wot some on 'em is that deep as will be sent out a-beggin', the same as I were took in by myself, with a-pretendin' to drop 'er matches, and is enuf to 'arden any one's 'art agin the poor; and that's why them judges and lawyers is so down on all impostors, thro' a-bein' so well up to their ways theirselves, a-practisin' on them every day

So Brown says to me two days arter he got back,
" Well, if you wants to support your Claimint he's

a-goin' to show up at the music 'alls round London."

Well I says, "He ain't afraid to show hisself any-ow;" but I says, "I'll go," not so much to see 'im, but to catch that willin that passed 'issel off for Wally," and certainly should 'ave went but could not that evenin' thro' 'avin' promised the gal to go and see her mother, as is a-sufferin' from dreadful palpitations as shakes the werry 'ouse as she lives in, with the bed a-rockin' like a ship in a storm.

So in course I were disappointed till the next day arter, when in comes Mrs. Whelpton, all of a fluster, as put the Claimint clean out of my 'ead, for I'm sure when I see 'er come in a-beamin' afore nine o'clock I thought it were twins at the werry least as 'er dorter 'ad got; and says to 'er, "I guesses! Ah! it's well as your son-in-law can earn 'is fifty shillin' a week as a brass-finisher, or he'd find a family a-comin' on that quick as would make four in three years a 'eavy load on a workin' man's shoulders," as were only a little gal, as it turned out, and never see six weeks.

She says, "Law bless you, it ain't my dorter as I'm a-crowin' over, but this 'ere Claimint, as I am that thankful to say as 'ave got 'is rights at last, thank goodness."

I says, "You don't say so."

She says, "Yes, and Whelpton will get a new

'at, and a five pound note in 'is pocket, as is wot 'ave been laid 'im over it."

Well I says, "In course, if he's the right man he did ought to be in the right place, as the sayin' is, and not be sent to Noogate;" but I says, "if he ain't why then 'angin's too good for 'im, in my opinion."

"Ah!" says she, "you've always been agin 'im."

I says, "Me, 'owever can you say so? Why, I've took more trouble over that man than if he'd been my own brother, and yet never able for to get a good look at 'im yet;" but I says, "'owever 'ave he got 'is rights? 'ave the Judge been and turned King's 'evidence, or the Turney-Gen'ral confessed anythink? or preaps the family 'ave come to their senses thro' a-findin' a mole about 'im somewhere, the same as Mrs. Moultin, as lost 'er son in the Chinese Sea, close agin 'Igh Street, Poplar, and 'ad a Malay come in one evenin' when settin' a-tween the lights, as the sayin' is, as walked up to 'er and says, 'Ow dye do, mother?'"

Well, a good many of them forriners called 'er mother thro' a-lettin' lodgins to 'em, and bein' very kind in sickness or waitin' for a wessel, and often times were more than a mother to a-many, as died in 'er 'ouse, and left their sea-chests behind 'em, as is the reason as she had stuffed birds and preserved ginger all over the place.

Well, so she didn't take no notice of that Malay and 'is motherly ways, but asks 'im 'ow long he meant to stop.

He says, "As long as you like, but," he says, "don't you remember me? I'm Sam."

She says, "Never in this world, with a beard like that down to your waist, and your nose all worked in a blue pattern like a savidge."

He says, "I'm Sam, I tell you, as run away to sea over eighteen years ago."

Then she says, "You've got a mulberry mark under your left arm, as gives you trouble when they're in season."

"Yes," he says, "that's right, that is," and takes off 'is jacket and jersey, and there it was safe enuf, as in course proved he were 'er son.

"No," says Mrs. Whelpton, "it ain't nothink like that 'as 'ave turned up, but," she says, "a lot of Lords 'ave took 'im up."

"Why," I says, "that's only wot the perlice done afore."

"No," she says, "they 'ave been and took 'is part along with Members of Parlyment, partikler one 'as I can't remember 'is name."

"Oh!" I says, "if Parlyment's took 'im up it's all right, as can make 'im King of Ingland, or anywhere else if they likes."

"Well," says Mrs. Whelpton, "I knows it's a

Member of Parlyment as is always a-goin' agin' the the Pope, and that's why he've been and took up this 'ere Claimint, cos for fear as the Pope should get the estates."

"Law!" I says, "Wot rubbish; I'm sure the Pope's a deal too much the gentleman for to take anyone's property away."

"Well," she says, "then if it ain't the Pope it's somebody else as is tryin' for to rob 'im, and so Parlyment won't see it done, and now Whelpton won't be kep' out of 'is new 'at nor the five pounds neither, as he did ought to 'ave got long ago, if that there Judge and Jury 'ad stood 'is friend."

"Well," I says, "'owever could the Judge know as Whelpton 'ad a new 'at and five pounds a-'angin' to it."

"Why," she says, "they all knowed it, for a friend of mine rote it to the Judge 'issel, a-askin' of 'im to mention it to the Jury; and Whelpton would 'ave got it all but for they're a-nonsuitin' of the Claimint, as would 'ave took the clothes off 'is back as well as the watch out of 'is pocket, and all 'is money."

I says, "That was 'is creditors, as he's a bankrupt and owes thousands to."

"Well," she says, "he'll get 'is rights now."

I says, "Then let's 'ope 'e'll pay 'is debts."

“ Well,” she says, “ to ‘ear ‘im speak there never were a man more wiley treated.”

“ Oh ! ” I says, “ but we ain’t bound to believe all ‘as he says arter ‘im a-statin’ on ‘is oath as he ‘ad said wot were false.”

“ Oh ! ” she says, “ he says he were bullied and badgered into that, and thro’ bein’ that confused didn’t know wot he were a-sayin’ with a sun stroke on ‘is ‘ead as ‘ad took away ‘is mem’ry.”

“ Well,” I says, “ he’d got a convenient mem’ry I must say, and remembercd some things as he’d better ‘ave forgot, in my opinion, even if they was true ; and I must say as I for one wouldn’t believe ‘im not if he was to talk till he’s black in the face.”

She says, “ Will you come and ‘ear ‘im talk.”

I says, “ I were a-goin’ the night ‘afre last, tho’ I don’t care about it much, for I’m sick on ‘im and so is nearly every one else.”

She says, “ He’s a-goin’ for to speak agin this werry day up at the Oxford, and I’m a-goin’ for to ‘ear ‘im myself, and you’d better come too.”

I says, “ I don’t seem to care about it, and as to goin’ to Oxford for to ‘ear him, I should as soon think of goin’ to the moon, as is a long journey.”

“ Why,” she says, “ a tuppenny bus will put us down at the door.”

“ Well,” I says, “ if there’s a bus as runs to

Oxford for tuppence, why," I says, "they'll be takin' you soon, as they did used to in the old coachin' days, when they was a-tryin' to run one another off the road, and would take you for nothink, and give you a good dinner on the road, jest to starve the others out, as were a-cuttin' one another's throats with a wengeance, as the sayin' is."

She says, "I were not illudin' to Oxford, thro' 'avin' said the Oxford, as is a music 'all."

"Oh!" says I, "I sets corrected; but wotever is he a-goin' there for? He ain't a-goin' to sing, is he?"

She says, "Oh, no; but he's a-goin' to address 'is friends, along with a many of them Members of Parlyment, partickler Mr. Wally."

"Oh!" I says, "I knows as they always call on Mr. Wally for to sing in Parlyment, thro' 'im bein' such a wonderful 'and at pitchin' 'em a stave about the Pope whenever he can get a word in hedgeways."

"Well," she says, "sing or not, will you come and 'ear 'im?"

I says, "When is he a-goin' to begin?"

She says, "About two; and if you'll call for me, as is only jest round the corner, we can go together."

I says, "I don't mind, as I'm only goin' to 'ave a bit of bacon and beans, if you'll come in."

"Why," she says, "I've got a bit of roast weal, only two pounds, with a wegetable marrer; so if

you'll throw your beans and bacon in, we could 'ave it together."

I says, "With all my 'art ; and the gal shall step round with them beans and bacon, as 'ave jest been out to get 'em, afore she sets to at 'er ironin'"

She says, "Put 'em into my basket, and I'll take 'em."

I says, "That you shall, for the gal's got 'er dinner, as is a bit of cold beef, and she can bile a potater, or 'ave a cowcumber, as is only three fardins, thro' not bein' a frame, but eats werry sweet and 'olesome with a onion."

Me and Mrs. Whelpton set down to that bit of weal and bacon by a quarter to one, and was off by a quarter past two for the Oxford, and when there, found as the shillin' part were full.

So I says, "I ain't a-goin' to spend no more over it."

"Oh !" she says, "I'll pay ; as I can well afford, as Whelpton is a-goin' to get 'is money."

I says, "Don't count your chickens afore they're 'atched."

"Why," she says, "he must be the right man now as Parlyment 'ave took 'im up."

I says, "We'll wait till we 'ears what they'll say to 'im at the Old Bailey."

She says, "They won't never dare to send 'im there no more, cos they're a-goin' to get 'im into

Parlyment, and then he'll be able for to speak to Queen Wictoria 'erself, and set all them lawyers at defiance."

I didn't much fancy that there Oxford, as seems a gay sort of a place, and 'ad a parcel of gals a-'angin' about the entrance on, a-sellin' flowers, and fans, and all manner like that, but no doubt was all friends with them young fellers as kep' a-comin' in and out, or else would never 'ave made so free with 'em.

I says to Mrs. Whelpton, "I can't see nothink 'ere, and I ain't a-goin' to pay no more than a shillin', and you shan't neither for me."

She says "I can't see nothink."

Jest then there were a great row a-goin' on in the room; so I climbs up on a basket as was standin' agin a side place as were shet off with a petition, and asks a gent as was a-settin' there wot were the row.

He says, "Only the Claimint," and pints to a stout party as were a-servin' parties with drink.

I says, "You don't mean to say as he's a-comin' the waiter?"

"Ah!" he says, "that's a character as he's used to."

"Yes," I says, "and one as he'll 'ave to stick to all 'is life afore he gets them estates."

Well, that fat man as were waitin' weren't, in course, the Claimint; but parties would keep on

a-callin' 'im so with their chaff, that he couldn't stop in the place.

" Well," I says, " I don't consider as this is the place for a barrernite to come to arter 'is rights, nor yet Parlyment neither."

Jest then the curting rosc, as were 'angin' over a platform at the other end, and there were that Claimint, as big as ever, with a lot more, as they said was all come out of Parlyment to support 'im.

There was a deal of oorayin' and clappin' of 'ands, and Mrs. Whelpton she got a-wavin' of 'er 'ankercher about violent, as I says to 'er, " It's a pity you didn't bring a clean one while you was about it;" but jest then she flicked it into a party's eye as stood next 'er, as calld 'er a name as is only fit for a dog, as made me tell 'im he weren't no gentleman.

I couldn't only jest ketch sight of that platform, and as to makin' out who they was, that I could not, tho' some said as the Judge were there as 'ad tried 'im, and others said as the Turney-Gen'ral were a-comin' for to say as he'd made a mistake, the same as he 'ad the night before down the Commercial Road way.

I thought as Mrs. Whelpton would 'ave gone wild, she were that eseited; so was a many more, as a little soap and water wouldn't 'ave done no 'arm to.

At last I managed for to get into a part where it wasn't quite so full, up in a corner; not as I wanted

to see that Claimint, but jest to ketch sight of that Wally, for to see if he were the same party as I'd stood the ale to, tho' in course I could not swear as he'd took my redicule.

I didn't see no one like 'im, and couldn't tell 'im by 'is white 'at, cos they didn't wear their 'ats.

A party as were close agin the corner as I'd got to, he were werry polite, but says as he didn't think there was many nobility there, in them crowds.

I says, "They may be lords and ladies in there, a-settin' smokin' and drinkin', but they don't look like it; but," I says, "I wish as I could get a full view of them as is on the platform."

"Well," he says, "if you goes right at the back, you will be able to squeeze in."

"No," I says, "I don't 'old with no scrougin'."

That there Claimint he begun a-talkin', but I couldn't 'ear a word as he said; but I must say as 'is looks wouldn't do 'im no good, as is as plain a man as you'll see in a day's walk; and I give a good look at 'im, for tho' I'd been down at Wcstminster, I never could get a full view on 'im, except in my dreams, as there ain't no trustin' to.

There was plenty of room in where them nobs wos a-settin', as you 'ad to pay another shillin' to pass; but I wasn't a-goin' to be done like that; so I went to the back, and wedged my way in among the crowd.

That there Claimint kep' on a-talkin', but must 'ave left 'is woice aboard the "Beller," or somewheres, for you couldn't 'ear 'im, leastways I couldn't, tho' some did, as 'ollered "Brayvo!" and "Shame!" constant; at last one young man close to me 'ollered out somethink about "You've got off werry easy."

There was such a row—parties a-callin' out, "Turn 'im out!" and some begun a-pitchin' into 'im.

I says, "Leave 'im alone."

But they give a rush at 'im, and looked like prize-fighters, and ketched 'old on 'im, and dragged 'im out as if they'd been wild beasts broke loose, some on 'em a-'ittin' at 'im, till a tall chap in a sort of a livery he ketched 'old on 'im and dragged 'im out.

They werry nigh trampled me under foot, only I ketched 'old of a pillar, or I should 'ave been swep' away; as it was, they knocked me clean off my legs.

So when I got up I looks round to see if I could swear to them as 'it me; but, law, it wouldn't 'ave been no good, cos you couldn't espect no fairness with such a crowd as that.

The party as 'elped me up says, "Why don't you pay another shillin', and go into the stalls?"

I says, "I've paid quite dear enuf; but," I says to them as I'd see a-shovin' that young man about, "you're a nice set to talk about fair play, and treat any one so for jest a-sayin' wot he thinks."

One man says to me, "You'd better 'old your tongue, or they'll 'ave you out too."

I says, "I'll save 'em the trouble, for I shall go ; but," I says, "it ain't fair as you should bonnet and insult any one as don't agree with that mask of corpulence."

I walked out of the place, and sat down outside on a sofy, and see a lot of larkin' goin' on all about ; not as I took no notice, thro' not a-wishin' to 'ave no insults, but set there jest the same as Queen Wictoria might, never a-forgettin' the lady.

Well, arter a bit, I see that old loonytick Mrs. Whelpton, a-dancin' about, and makin' signs to me ; so I gets up, and were a-goin' inside agin when a cheeky young chap in buttons says, "No re-admission."

I says, "Don't talk rubbish, child, to your betters," and swep' 'im out of the way, cos I 'adn't been three yards outside where the room was.

I goes in, and sees Mrs. Whelpton a-'angin' on to somethink as she climbed on to. She says, "Come 'ere, and you'll 'ear Wally."

I says, "All right. I should like to 'ear a good song."

So I goes up to where she was, and ketches 'old of what she were a-standin' on, and tried for to get up, when away it all come over with a crash, as proved to be a large basket full of empty soder-water bottles.

I thought as I were killed, and so I should 'ave been if it 'adn't been for me a-fallin' back on to a lot as 'ad follered me ; but Mrs. Whelpton, she'd pitched for'ard as I dragged the basket away, and went a-flyin' over the petition into the extra shillin' place.

A lot on 'em picked me up, and the soder-water bottles too, as 'ad made that row some thought the roof were a-comin' in, and one says to me, " Now you jest go afore you gets into trouble, cos I knows you, as if I was to give 'em the straight tip inside, there's a lot as wouldn't leave a rag on your back, as it's my opinion you're a Jesuit in disguise."

Well, jest then there was a deal more clappin' of 'ands and oorayin', as they said was the meetin' a-breakin' up.

I'd got to that seat outside agin, and let 'em all go a-rushin' by, I couldn't see nothink of Mrs. Whelpton for ever so long, till she come out another way, with 'er nose in 'er 'ankercher, as 'ad been a-bleedin' torrents.

She certingly be'aved werry fair, thro' not a-blamin' me, and said as they wanted 'er to go on to the platform, as she said she meant to at Islin'ton, where they was a-goin' to 'ave 'im at a monster meetin'

" Well," I says, " let's get out of this place."

She says, " Won't you stop to see 'im come out?"

I says, "Not if I knows it." So out we walked, and I says, "Mrs. Whelton, mum, he's never a-goin' to show 'issel' about."

She says, "Law ! why not?"

"Why," I says, "no born gentleman, wouldn't like to go a-showin' of 'issel' about at pot-'ouses, and make 'issel' into a monster-meetin', which is jest the same as turnin' of 'issel' into a wild beast show; cos," I says, "as to them people, there was as many agin 'im as for 'im, tho' they dursn't say so for fear of bein' ill-used and turned out."

"Oh !" she says, "he spoke beautiful, and so did others, as give it the Turney-Gen'ral well."

I says, "Did he ? Well, then," I says, "he does credit to them as 'ave been teachin' on 'im all this time ; and, in course, if he've 'ad lessons from Members of Parlyment they knows 'ow to speak ; and any'ow, it's a blessin' as he've got back 'is mem'ry, as the sun or somethink 'ad took away ; but," I says, "them parties as is a-persuadin' on 'im to go about like this, in my opinion, wants for to do 'im 'arm, or else is werry bad judges, and as to them a-bein' that insultin' over the Turney-Gen'ral, that's all foolishness, and don't prove nothink."

"In course he must live, this 'ere Claimint, and he's quite right to live like a fightin'-eoek on them as'll let 'im ; and as to friends, as long as he can give good dinners, and make 'issel' pleasant, why, he'll 'ave

thousan's of them, as'll swear by 'im. But all as I've got to say is, you don't ketch me a-puttin' any more money in 'is bonds, cos I never 'opes to see the penny back as I give for that one as I bought of a boy in the Strand ; but if I did, I might preaps go in as strong for 'im as you do, nat'rally a-lookin' for'ard to that there new 'at for Whelpton and the five pounds, as'll be a pretty thing agin Christmas."

Well, jest then I see that party as I'd give the ale to, thro' pretendin' as he were Wally, a-standin' near the door, white 'at and all, so goes up to 'im and says "Good day, Mr. Wally ; 'opes you're none the worse for the ale as you took with me the other arternoon ? "

He stares at me and says, "Wot's your game ? "

I says, "That's just wot I'm a-goin' to ask you when I gets you afore a Magistret," so I says, "give me up my property or I gives you in charge to one of these perlice as is close by."

"Why," he says, "you must be mad, or in licker ; what are you talkin' about ? I never see you afore."

I says "You did, last Wednesday fortnight, agin the 'Ouses of Parlyment, and said you was Mr. Wally."

"Law," says the feller, "you're drunk."

I says, "I'll 'ave the law on you ; here, perlice."

Up comes the perlice and says, "Wot is it ? "

and I told 'im, as says, "do you give 'im in charge for robbin' you."

I says, "Not exactually, if he'll give back the redicule, he may keep the money."

Says the feller to the perlice, "She's wrong in 'er nut, off 'er chump, or somethink, for she keeps on a-sayin' as I'm Mr. Wally, as my name is Baynes and lives at Plumpstead, where lots knows me, and ain't been in town till to-day not for three weeks."

Just then some one says, "Clear the way, they're a-comin' out."

"Yes," says that feller, "there's Mr. Wally, if you wants 'im," so I goes for'ard a-thinkin' as I might indemnify 'im, or jest ask if he 'ad see me that evenin', when the perlice shoves me back a-sayin', "Come, none of your games;" the drivc as he gave me sent me on somebody's toes as were standin' behind me, as in a rage gives me sich a bonneter, and one give me a pull, and another a push, till I were drove out in the road. While parties was a-oorayin' that Claimint as got into a carridge and drove off a-leavin' of me a regular wreck, jest like the Royal George as went down with the port 'oles open, and no one left to tell the tale.

I were that tattered and tore as I were glad to get into a cab, tho' at first he wouldn't take me, a sayin' as I were too far gone and did ought to 'ave the stretcher, with lots of men and boys a-'ootin' and

jeerin' as no doubt that willin' in the white at' set on to me.

I don't know as I should 'ave minded anythink, but could not stand Mrs. Whelton a-sayin' as I'd gone on shameful at that meetin' a-tryin' to get up a row, a-sayin' as the Claimint were a impostor, and as Mr. Wally 'ad 'ocussed and robbed me.

So I says to 'er, "Do for mussy sake stick to truth wotever you do. Whenever did I say as the Claimint were a impostor? I says quite contrary; for I says as I don't 'old with no one a-tryin' for to defeat the end of justice, as the sayin' is, and wouldn't think of 'angin' 'im without a fair trial, and preaps if I 'ad thousans a-dependin' on 'im a-gettin' of the estates I might go about a-tryin' to persuade parties as he's the real man, and that's why it's sich a good thing as all them gents as is with 'im is a 'onerary lot and don't care for 'is dinners, and won't lose nothink by 'im 'cos they don't want to get nothink but justice for 'im as it wot we all 'ope he'll get, and plenty on it too."

Brown, he were put out at me a-talkin' about Mr. Wally a-takin' a glass of ale, and then a-levantin' with my redicule.

I say, "Do listen to reason, Brown, and you'll see 'ow I were mistook all thro' Mr. Wally a-wearin' a white 'at, as might mislead any one, and 'ave done so too, for I well remembers when a man went into

Mrs. Pembleton's shop and throwed snuff in 'er eyes and bolted with change for a sov'rin, as she were countin' 'im out, as had only bought a pair of boot-laces, a party in a white 'at were collared for it as were runnin' round the corner and proved to be the wrong man as she'd 'ollered stop thief arter, and when I see Mr. Wally on that platform I could tell at once as he weren't the party as I met at the door arterwards, and only called Mr. Wally derisive as is my way."

"Well," says Brown, "I'm goin' out of town for two or three weeks and I do 'ope as 'ow you'll keep out of that there Claimint's way."

I says, "If it's your wishes I obeys, but certainly should like to see 'im showed at the Monster's Meeting at Islin'ton, and must see 'im at the Old Bailey, tho' not a-meanin' to foller 'im to the scaffoldin' in case he should be found guilty, as in course would be a capital punishment."

But I says, "As to me a-sidin' agin 'im, I never knowed any one in the name afore I 'eard Tichbung spoke on as bein' the real barrernite, so of course 'adn't no feelin's over the matter, only as I says to the Judge, leastways would say if he were to ask me a civil question over it, I should say, 'My Lud, you'll excuse me but wot I thinks so singler is as this 'ere party as 'ad lost 'is memory should get it back, tho' in course you certainly do lose everythink in a ship-

wreck, for there was my mother's own uncle as sailed aboard of the Raddymanthus, and got wrecked and went down on a coral reef in the middle of the night, and set three days in nothing but his socks with sharks a-comin' up and a-lookin' at 'im, a-lickin' of their lips, but couldn't reach so far as 'is feet till he were picked up by a waler as come along by axcidence and see 'is shirt a-flutterin' in the breeze, as the sayin' is, as he'd took off for a flag as he 'adn't 'ardly the strength to wave it out to sea, and as often told me he must 'ave died but for chewin' of his worsted socks, as had a deal of nourishment in em', the same as calves' feet as will make a strong jelly, or a cow 'eel quite as good; and I 'ave 'eard say as all that gelatine is made out of feet, as shows their strength, and when you come to think what a kick a 'orse can give, why, it stands to reason as 'is feet must be strong with all the work they 'as to do, partikler some as never finds time to set down from mornin' till night.'"

But as I were a-sayin' it's wonderful 'ow he 'ave got his mem'ry back, not as I think he minded bein' shipwrecked a bit, for I'm sure he'd 'ave floated like a boy as they always throws overboard for to save any one's life in a shipwreck, and can't go down any more than a cork, or a bottle, as will float on for ever, and 'ave been washed ashore after that with any one's last dying words wrote in it, as is a great

consolation to them survivors as may be a-quarrelin' over the property and then 'ave the will turned up like that.

And that's why so many feels for this 'ere Claimint thro' bein' pretty near a sailor all his life, and that's why he went to Wappin' that night as he got 'ome, thro' not a-feelin' at 'ome like fur from the waterside.

Not as Wappin is a place as many would care to live in ; but, law! use is second nature, as the sayin' is, and I'm sure old Mrs. Bulpit, as lived in a court near Whitechapel work'us, she werry soon died when they took 'er down to Ilford for change of air ; as I do think as country air is too strong for them as is used to 'ave it drawed mild in a court.

Then there's the mangle as Mrs. Bulpit lived by ; it's fine exercise for the lungs, as I'm sure 'ern was strong enuf, for you could 'ear 'er a blowin' Bulpit up sky-'igh, as the sayin' is, from mornin' till night, as got that used to it as he didn't 'ear a word she said.

Now as I 'ave 'ad a good view of that Claimint's figger, as 'ave been took a-standin' with 'is 'ead a one side and 'is legs crossed, as looked werry graceful, and 'owever he kep' on 'is legs I can't think. I says, "It were a fine sight to see 'im, and them Parlyment parties all round 'im, as ain't a-goin' to leave 'im to the laws of 'is country to try 'im, but will 'ave it as Judge and Jury and all will be agin 'im,

so in course says he won't 'ave fair play ; and that's why these gents is a-bringin' for'ard a good deal of particklers now as they knows as the Judge won't allow to be spoke." But as I were a-sayin' to Mrs. Martin, as 'er son stands to lose a deal of money over 'is bein' transported, I says, "I don't believe as the Judge and Jury is agin 'im, for it would be werry orful to live in sich a country, where you can't get your rights without a-goin' about a-showin' yourself for a shillin', and obligated to tell your story, cos they won't 'ear the truth about you in a court of justice."

"Yes," she says, "but if it's left to the people of Ingland, he'll get 'is rights, jest the same as that there publicity in France, they do say, would."

I says, "No doubt ; but," I says, "do you mean to tell me as all the costers, and dustmen, and scavengers, and navvies, and day labourers is more likely to be right over this 'ere Claimint than the judges, and lawyers, and gentlemen in the land ? "

"Ah !" she says, "they're all agin 'im, and that's why the poor 'ave took 'im up."

"Well," I says, "I may be wrong, but it looks to me as tho' lots of them as can't know nothink about it 'ave been and took 'is part jest because them as must be best judges is agin 'im, parties as 'ave set and listened to 'is own words day arter day, and 'eard the things as he let out as.

“No,” I says, “I’m for fair play, as is a jewel, as the sayin’ is, and them as listens to all as he’ve got to say did ought to ‘ear the other side ; and don’t you think as one story is werry good till another’s told ?”

“Well,” she says, “I do ‘ope as my son will get ‘is money.”

“Yes,” says Mrs. Whelpton, “and Whelpton’s ‘at is that shabby, and I won’t let ‘im buy one, cos we’re sure to win the day agin all them tyrants as would trample a poor man under foot.”

I see it weren’t no use a-talkin’ to ‘er, nor neither on ‘em for that matter, as is a couple of old fools, as drove Brown out of the room ; but it’s wot you might expect from sich ; but I do think as them as calls theirselves gentlemen, for to go on to abuse the laws, is downright shameful, cos in course if this ‘ere Claimint is the right man, he’s sure to prove it now, and if he ain’t, he’s on the right side, for them as believes in ‘im bein’ a marter will in course take care on ‘im as long as he lives, as in course that Mr. Wally is bound to do, cos he says he’s certing as he’s the right man as he’s alive, and will say it ag’in all the Judges and Juries as ever lived. So any’ow the Claimint is provided for, whether they sends ‘im to the ‘ulks, or ‘is friends gives ‘im money to live on till he dies.

But as I said afore, he certingly ‘ave made a great

mistake over this 'ere music 'all move, tho' he may come out some day and dance the cure or play the banjo, as nobody can't speak agin 'is doin', as it will be turnin' a honest penny, and a sight as thousan's would go to see 'im in a new character like that, even if he was to go on to the sands at Ramsgate, as I've see parties myself a-pickin' up money by the 'atfull as was said to be noblemen in disguise a-playin' the guitar in the streets for a lark, but made a little fortin in coppers, as in course will run into pounds in time, jest the same as the oshun is made up of drops, as the sayin' is ; and I've 'eard say as a pin a day is a groat a year, as would take a long life to make a fortin out on, but yet didn't ought never to be wasted, and always picks 'em up myself, tho' wotever becomes on 'em nobody can't tell in this world.

Mrs. Parley, as is a nice woman as lives oppersite Mrs. Padwick, and drops in pretty frequent of a evenin' for a chat, and always makes a deal of fuss over me ; not as we always agrees, cos she's got a good many fancy ways with 'er, and is full of this 'ere Claimint, thro' 'er own little brother bein' lost once for three days, and 'er mother a-goin' about the streets night and day till found a-playin' down among the 'Delphi dark arches, and never could tell 'ow he'd lived, but 'ad slep' two nights on the baskets in Common Garden Markit, as is open to any one.

Well, she was always at me over the Claimint, a-sayin' as I'd made up my mind, she could see.

As I says to 'er, "Excuse me, but it is not my 'abits for to put in my word where not wanted, and as for me a-tryin' to pamper with a Judge or even talk to the Jury, I wouldn't do it, as is a-puttin' of yourself for'ard, as you should leave for your betters, as is wot I calls a-comin' the Queen all over."

No doubt I shall go to the Old Bailey, and no doubt I shall give 'em a bit of my mind ; but you don't ketch me a-goin' with a low lot as I let myself down to at Westminster, as were a reg'lar disgrace, tbo' I shall not mention no names.

"Ah !" says Mrs. Padwick, " Martha'll be better worth 'earin' than all the papers, and I'm sure they'll put 'er in the witness-box."

I says, "Never ; for I don't know nothink more than any one else, and as to that party a-bringin' a haction agin me for makin' of a mistake in a excursion train, as were not my fault, thro' that other lady a-bein' in the same boat, as the sayin' is, not but what she took and backed out on it, thro' a sayin' as that stout party were a relation as 'er 'usband were a-goin' to indite for 'avin' been and perjured 'isself over a will, and nothink to do with the Claimint, as I can swear as she spoke quite different to me in the train, as only shows as there ain't no trustin' nobody in this world, for I'm sure she spoke fair enough to

me over 'er troubles, as was 'eavy ; but I never trusts to parties as is always bad off."

"Ah !" says Mrs. Parley, " there ain't no bein' up to them."

"No," I says, " and as to the poor, I don't know what's come to 'em, for they're always wantin' some-thing."

She says, " Ah ! you may well say so, for our poor's rates is a-eatin' of us up."

" Ah !" I says, " and not only that, but," I says, " look at them beggin'-letter impostors, as I got into nice trouble thro', as parties wouldn't 'ardly credit it, with that deeception as would take in a Jew, as never don't believe nothink they 'ears, and only 'arf wot they sees ; as is the reason as they're that unbelievin' as makes 'em a by-word, as the sayin' is ; tho' I must say as never shall I forget that there beggin'-letter as come under my own eye."

She says, " You don't say so !"

I says, " I do."

Mrs. Parley she's a kind-'arted soul, she is, as can't abear to see a dog a-sufferin', tho' she don't think much of the poor, but is always a-worretin' me about the 'eathens, and I see weren't attendin' to me.

So I says to 'er, " I'm worry sorry for the 'eathens, in course, and would 'elp 'em out of their

'eathen ways, if they'd let me, but," I says, "they're that perwerve, and 'ad the cheek for to 'rite and tell the Archbishop of Canterbury to mind 'is own business, as is nice gratitood arter the millions upon millions as we've been and spent a-tryin' to make 'em better, to say nothink of the missionaries as they've been and eat in cold blood, as I don't admire their taste myself, and shows bad feelin' a-returnin' evil for good like that."

"Ah!" says Mrs. Parley, "the Archbishop were quite right to give a word in warnin' "

I says, "I should think so, indeed; partikler with them 'eathen Chinee a-goin' among them young lawyers in the Temple, as they might ruin for life by their bad esamples and 'eathen ways, and a pretty thing it would be if we was to 'ave our nobility a-goin' on like them 'eathen Turks, and 'avin' a lot of wives and columbines, instead of one lawful wife, as we all knows as is wot them swells is werry partikler about; cos, in course, it wouldn't do for a Dook or a Lord as is a Christshun to go on like as I've 'eard them say as 'ave been over in Injier them native princes does, with their dancin'-gals all dressed out in fine jewels, a-desertin' their wives, and a-goin' on shameful; and all as I've got to say is, if Brown was a native Prince, and come any of them games, I'd precious soon settle them 'ussies, and 'im too.

"And then to think of the way as them 'eathens

treats the women and children, a-desertin' of their offspring, and leavin' them to starve, and their mothers too, as I'm sure we did ought to be thankful as we live in a Christshun country, with a Archbishop to look arter us ; and not among 'eathens, as never darkens a church-doors, and lives in every sort of wice, and will take and kick about the poor women, and break their jaws, tho' they are their own wives, and no magistrates nor nothink to punish 'em, as may be locked up for a day or two ; and as to murder, it's quite a lark, tho' I've 'eard they do go thro' a mockery of tryin' for it, and says werry solemn words about their bein' put to death ; but them murderers knows it's only a lark, and that they won't be 'ung, especially them as murders their own wives, or women as murders their own children."

Oh ! if we was to 'ave such goin's-on, we should be wuss than 'eathens in no time.

Then, see 'ow awful them 'eathens treats their slaves, as 'as to work till they drops, without enuf to eat, and bad pay when they can work, while their masters is a-livin' in luxury and wice. Oh ! it's 'igh time as we put a stop to 'eathens comin' among us, as will reg'lar corrupt us all ; and if they gets down at the East End, why, we should 'ave all them thousands, as is good-livin', quiet people now, a-turnin' drunkards, and doin' all manner as is wrong. Oh, no ! that's the blessin' of Ingland, as the rich sets

sich good esamples as the poor follers, and so it is we ain't got no 'eathen ways amongst us, and don't want none ; and that's why we can afford to spend such lots of money to send Missionaries to them 'eathen, cos everybody 'ere is taught their dooty, and, wot's more, does it ; or else they'd 'avc the Archbishop down on 'em pretty smart, even if they was the Lord Mare 'isself.

Says Mrs. Parley, " Ah ! " she says, " that's wot Livin'stone's been and done in goin' over to Africker."

" Ah ! " I says, " and a good thing too, if he could send them Africkins over 'ere to see 'ow good Christshuns did ought to live ; and no doubt they'd all turn Christshuns at once."

" Ah ! " she says, " it's dreadful to think of 'ow wicked the world is ! "

" Yes," I says, " and wot's more, if it wasn't for good Christshuns like Inglishmen, there'd be a pretty how-d'ye-do all over everywhere, as is wot I espects there will be, and am that thankful as we lives on a 'Ighland, and can keep ourselves to ourselves."

" But," she says, " any'ow, it's a mussy as Livin'stone's been found, as made our minister shed tears over the pulpit, thro' bein' of the Wesleyan Connection, as is my persuasion."

I says, " Oh, indeed ? " not a-knowin' wot she

were a-talkin' about, for I never did 'old with the Wesleyans, nor my mother before me, sinee the time as a field preacher took and married 'er own aunt, as lived near Cow Cross, and old enuf to be 'is mother, and only sixty pound a-year as died with 'er, but a nice little 'ouse of 'er own ; but, law ! in course Mr. Wesley 'adn't nothink to do with that.

So I says, "Who is Livin'stone?"

"Wot?" she says, "don't you know about 'is travels out in Afrieker, as 'ave been lost in the sandy desert all these years, as a Merrykin gent fell in with, tho' not a-goin' the same way?"

"Ah!" I says, "dug 'im out, eh? Ah! them Merrykins is parties as 'll find a thing out, and don't mind the way. But," I says, "it's a eomfort as Mrs. Livin'stone 'ave 'eard of 'er 'usband, as might 'ave settled agin, a-thinkin' 'im dead. But," I says, "what did he ever go for?"

"Why," she says, "he wanted to find out if it were true as them rivers over Afrieker way flowed out of the moon, as sets among them mountings over there, as is that 'igh you ean almost reach it from."

"Well," I says, "they'll find out somethink at last. But," I says, "nobody wouldn't be so foolish as to go a-lookin' arter the moon in a river, like I've 'eard say some of them yokels does in the country, as goes a-moon-rakin'."

"No," she says, "it's parties as thinks as them rivers flows out of the moon."

"Well," I says, "I don't know much about jography, and certingly 'ave 'eard as the moon draws the tides, so why not the tides the moon, [as is a werry singl'er elemint, and never could make out wot it were made for myself, cos, if it's for light, there ought to be four, or else one as would keep on reg'lar, like the sun.]"

"Well," she says, "Livin'stone will tell us all about it, no doubt."

"Well," I says, "when's he a-comin'?"

"Oh," she says, "not for two years; leastways that's wot he told that 'ere Merrykin gent as fell in with 'im, and would 'ave brought 'im 'ome, only he said as he'd rather stop, cos he loves them Africkins and their ways, tho' he ain't got no clothes, nor 'ardly no food; so, as he wouldn't come away, in course that Merrykin gent wished him a good day."

"Wot!" I says, "and come away and left 'im behind in the sand among them savidges, all in a sandy desert, as must be mad, cos I'm sure if I'd been Livin'stone, in my right senses, I'd rather he 'adn't 'ave come than 'ave left me behind like that, as is a awful place, cos I remembers a book about Mungor Park, as went a-travellin' about them parts, and got killed for 'is pains, and that's all the good

as he got ; and I'm sure the world is quite big enuf, and ain't arf on it inhabited, and nobody can't live in comfort in such 'eat as that, with lions, and tigers, and serpents, and gorillas, and black men all about the place ; so, wotever is the use of discoverin' of it, as everybody knows as it's there, and there let it be ; and I'm sure if I'd gone out there and found a dog a-'owlin' in the sand, I wouldn't 'ave left 'im behind, not with a kettle to 'is tail ; but," I says, "no doubt it's all right if the Merrykins says so, cos they are sich wonderful ones for to go ahead, and won't let no one be afore 'em ; but," I says, "I wish he'd 'ave gone after this 'ere Claimint years ago, and then we shouldn't 'ave all this trouble over 'im now ; but," I says, "thank goodness, November'll soon be 'ere, and then it must be settled, I should say."

Well, Mrs. Massey, she shook 'er 'ead, as were full of Livin'stone, as she said Queen Wictoria 'adn't slep' for nights a-thinkin' about, and 'ad sent this 'ere Merrykin a dimon snuff-box.

" Ah," I says, "I daresay one as belonged to old Queen Charlotte, as took it by the bushel, as partly drove King George mad, cos he did used to sneeze so frightful over it, as is the way with some as can't never get used to it, any more than smokin', as will make Joe Barnes turn faint if he only tries a sheeroot ; but I says, " I do 'ope as this 'ere Merry-

kin won't be a-sendin' in 'is bill for to 'ave another row over."

"Oh no," she says, "all expenses is paid by a party as is like King over the Merrykins."

I says, "Oh, rubbish! Why, they ain't got no King, and not even a Lord Mare."

"Oh," she says, "he must be somethink werry grand, for he got a-dreamin' about Livin'stone bein' lost in the sand, so took and sent for this 'ere Stanley, and settin' up in 'is bed, says to 'im, 'Now you take and clear out, and go find Livin'stone.'"

"Law!" I says, "and preaps he'd never 'eard tell on 'im, and didn't know where to look for 'im."

"Jest so," says she, "that's 'ow it were; but he durstn't disobey that great man, so packs up 'is things, a-sayin', 'If you sends me, I go.'"

"Ah," I says, "as may be, preaps, a negro black 'issself, cos there's a many on 'em still in Merryker, tho' they're a-tryin' to kill 'em off as much as they can; but," I says, "any'ow it were a good act to go like that and look arter a fellow-creetur, as I'm sure Queen Wictoria would like 'im for; but I shall be glad to 'ear Livin'stone's story, as no doubt he'll write by the next mail, and tell us all about it, and 'ow glad he 'ad been to see this 'ere Stanley, as he must 'ave been surprised to see walkin' in the middle of a desert; but," I says,

"wot were I a-goin' to say when you put it out of my 'ead, Mrs. Parley?"

"Oh," she says, "you was a-talkin' about the poor, and beggin'-letters, and I were a-remarkin' 'ow as every one 'ad been beggin' for the 'eathen, if it was only a penny on a card, might do some good."

"Ah," I says, "and I were a-sayin' as I should like to see wot become of any pennies as you may give away, and get yourself into trouble thro' a-tryin' to do good, the same as me with them beggin'-letter impostors, as I were reg'lar drawed into the gang, and all thro' a lady as I knows a'-ritin' me a letter a-sayin' as she'd be much obliged if I'd look arter the case, as were deep consumption, livin' at the top of a 'ouse near the Edgware Road as she knewed were 'andy to me now as I'd moved close by; so, in course I were glad for to 'elp any one in sickness like that, partikler thro' 'earin' as there were a wife and family, and the weather that cold and wet thro' a late spring, as is always tryin' to the constitution, partikler with a cough as 'ave settled on the lungs thro' neglectin' of a cold, as 'ave brought many to their death's door, as the sayin' is, the same as Mrs. Sawell's dorter, as were saved thro' swallerin' of a raw oyster when fastin' the fust thing, and 'ave 'eard say as snails is a wonderful thing for, but in my opinion nothink like pure air with lots of animal food, as gives strength to the

constitution, as no lozengers never wont do, tho' they may soothe, the same as I once knowed a pill as would give a night's rest like magic; but that ain't the same as a perfect cure; and as to goin' abroad, a sea woyage may do wonders; but not them forrin parts, with the land of Egyp' throwed in, as there's somethink in the hair on as won't let even a mummy decay, so must be fine for the 'uman frame when not too far gone, as is in gen'ral the case with them as is sent abroad, as the doctors wants to get rid on 'em without 'avin' their deaths to anser for, as in course nobody likes to 'ave laid at their doors.

As I were a-sayin', I never shall forget that case, as were the most barefaced as ever I knowed, with a doctor's certificate as were no doubt a forgery, a-sayin' as the patient were on the last stage, and must 'ave wine and stimmylants, as this 'ere lady told me she'd allow twclve shillins a week and two bottles of wine, with a bottle of rum, as he were to take with milk the fust thing, and to 'ave 'is mind kep' easy all day as much as possible.

I 'ad some bother to find 'em, for they was lodgin' over a broker's shop, and 'ad the two top rooms, with stairs enuf to drag your 'art out for steepness, and the last flight as dark as Noogate, as the sayin' is.

The fust time as ever I see the man, I says to myself, "You're no consumption, my boy, except

wine and sperrits, as I considered was a full allowance."

I couldn't a-bear 'is wife from the fust, for she were a dirty beast with a child as dirty as 'erself, and the man as were in bed he were as grubby as could be, and well evcry one knows as is used to sickness 'ow dirty any one gets in bed.

I give 'em that relief as the lady 'ad sent 'im, but never fancied the case some'ow, and did used to go a-toilin' up them stairs with things for 'im as one day would 'ave 'is 'ead shaved, and another lceeches on; then 'is wife a-tellin' me as shc 'adn't expected 'im to see mornin'

But I never could talk to that ooman, as were always a-talkin' of when they'd been well off, and 'ow it were as 'er 'usband's father were a man of property but 'ad broke down thro' railways a-fallin' sunder.

I never could see the doctor as were attendin' that man, for he'd either jest gone when I come, or 'ad sent word as he were not a-comin' that day; and when I asked wot he said on 'im, that woman would turn away 'er 'ead and dry 'er eyes on the back of 'er 'and.

Well, one day as Mr. Turton come to see me I got 'im to go and see that man, as took and sounded 'im all over with 'is steryscope, as he always carries in 'is 'at, and when he comes out he says, "Well, in my opinion he's a malingerin."

I says, "Oh! indeed, then he may last sometime."

"Bless you," he says, "there's nothink like dyin' about 'im."

"Well," I says, "if he's like that it may be years as he goes on."

"Ah!" say Mr. Turton, "he'll go on as long as any one will support 'im."

Well, that give me my suspicions, so I rote that werry night to the lady as sent me the relief for 'im and told as I were not satisfied.

Well, she sent a parson to see 'im as were convinced as he were a real case, and so the relief went on; not as I took it myself, but sent it by a party as I could trust, and did used to drop in now and then myself, but never see nothink, till jest about Christmas a party called on me from the Mendacity Society to ask questions about them people, as in course I couldn't answer, thro' not a-knowin'."

It must 'ave been a day or two arter that as I thought I'd go and see my case, as is wot the good lady called it as asked me to look arter it, and a nice cold night it were, jest the day afore New Year's Eve, and a wind a-blowin' enuf to cut you in 'arf, so I rops myself up in my warm shawl and thinks as I'd take that man a little jelly as I'd made for Christmas time, thinkin' as preaps I'd been too 'ard on 'im.

When I got to the 'ouse the door was ajar, and

in I goes, a-thinkin' it were careless to 'ave left it open sich a night and a invalid in the 'ouse, so up I goes a-stumblin' for want of a light, and when I got to the first floor I 'eard sich a-singin' and goin' on in the front room.

"Well," I says, "I calls that unfeelin' with any one a-layin' at death's door in the floor above," for that minister 'ad told me the poor man were worse.

As there wasn't no light on them stairs I knowed I should break my neck and the bason as I'd got the jelly in too if I tried to go up in the dark, so I gives a rap at that front room door, to ask 'em to show me a light; as soon as I touched the door it flew open and never was I more took a-back.

For the room was full of men and women all a-drinkin' and smokin', with a smell of punch cnuf to knock you down; and there sat my patient, reg'lar roarin' drunk, a-shoutin' and a-singin' with that wife of 'is'n on 'is knee, and all the lot a-goin' on disgraceful.

I reg'lar staggered back, and dropp'd my jelly on the floor, and then the sick man ollers out, "Hallo! Mother Brown, 'ow are you? Come in, all right, we're all friends."

I say, "No, I thank you."

"Bring 'er in Tom," and before I could say Jack Robison, as the sayin' is, a young feller ketched

'old on me and shoves me into a chair a-sayin, "Set down and make your lifc 'appy."

I says, "You'll excuse me a-stoppin' as only come to inquire for the sick, as I'm glad to sec 'ave recovered 'is 'ealth," I spoke quite civil like, for seein' as they was all reg'lar cut, as the sayin' is, I didn't want to aggrawate 'em.

"Hoorar," says the invalid, "give Mrs. Brown a glass of punch to drink a'appy New Year."

Up jumps a feller and puts a glass in my 'and that brim full that I 'ad to put it to my lips for fear it should go all over my dress and only jest saved it; as I got it up to my mouth I 'eard one of 'em give a shout like, and turnin' my 'ead there stood two perlice, and that man as 'ad called on me as said he come from the Mendacity Society.

I werry nigh pitched forward a-springin' on to my feet and says, "Oh! perlice, I'm glad you're come to get me out of this,"

"Oh!" says that Mendacity man, "we'll 'ave you out of this, all the lot of you."

I see as all the rest was took up short, but they didn't say nothink, none on 'em but that there sick man's wife as 'ad a fit on the floor, as was nothink but bein' overtook in licker.

The perlice said as they was a-goin' to take the lot as was a reg'lar lot of beggin'-letter impostors.

"Ah!" I says, "and serve 'em right for the

way as they've been a-imposin' on a lady as I knows."

Says the feller as 'ad been a-pretendin' sickness, "Don't let'er go, she's 'ad 'arf the swag."

I thought I should 'ave dropped, so I says, "Perlice, I am well beknown for a respectable party as come 'ere to 'elp the distressed."

"I dare say," says the Mendacity man, "and 'elped yourself at the same time just to 'arf a tumbler."

What to do I didn't know, for the perlice would 'ave took me if I 'adn't gone into Mr. Praddle the baker's, as said he'd go bail for me, and 'ad to step to the Station 'Ouse with me, and if I 'adn't been a-settin' with a reg'lar lot of thieves.

So the Inspector took my name and let me go, on promisin' as I'd appear the next day, and 'ome I 'urried more dead than alive with fright and cold.

I were expectin' Brown 'ome by the train as wouldn't be in till jest on one, so 'ad a bit fire in my bed-room, and told the gal for to give me some 'ot water for my feet, and a good jorum of gruel, for I felt as tho' the cold and the fright 'ad struck right into my constitution, and might bring me to an untimely end, as the sayin' is.

I've 'ad bad nights in my time, and 'eard tell of 'em thro' parties as I've set up with a-tellin' me in the mornin', but never sich a night as that, and so

orful real, as I could 'ave touched the gallows, and see the rope a-danglin', and 'eard the crowd a-murmurin', and there I was a-settin' in the cart along with that poor creetur, jest like the idle 'prentiss a-goin' to be 'anged, as there was beautiful picturs on a-'angin' in Alderman Wittles' own study, as he 'ad for a warnin' to all young people as goes wrong, a-gamblin' on toom stones of a Sunday when they did ought to be in church, and a shame for to bring the beadle out, when in course he wanted to listen to the sermon, and were obligated for to go all round the churchyard a-lookin' for idle prentisses.

Not but wot I 'ave knowed a beadle and the 'ead pew opener in a city church, as always wore a black silk of a Sunday, to set all the service thro' over the westry fire, and the minister not got but four or five to listen to 'im, as was poor people and got the 'arf quartern loaves, as was all put upon shelves inside the church, and give away after service to them deservin' poor as come merry reg'lar, thro' bein' them as always sticks to the church, jest the same as the minister 'issclf, cos they gets their bread by it.

Well, I can't tell you wot my sufferin' was, a-seein' that poor Claimint a-settin' oppersite me on 'is own coffin, a-smokin' of 'is pipe and a-larfin'; so I says, "Don't go to larf, don't; but," I says, "jest say the word, and not go out of the world with a falsehood;" and then I see 'em a-puttin' the rope

round 'is neck, as, I says, won't never bear 'im, thro' bein' no thicker than my clothes line; and so I says to the party as were a-doin' it.

He turns on me, and says, "I'll attend to you in a minnit."

I says, "Wot for?"

He says, "Oh! you're a-goin' to be 'ung with 'im, you know."

I says, "Why, I ain't been tried, as is every Englishman's rights."

He says, "Old up, and I'll slip the rope round you."

I says, "You never shall while I've breath in my body."

He says, "Oh! don't make a row; it's nothink when you're used to it; and," he says, "I'll 'ang on to your legs."

I says, "You dare to."

Well, I felt as the rope were round my neck, and the next minnit there were that feller a-'angin' on to my legs that 'eavy as kick out I couldn't, for they was reg'lar benumbed like; but I give a violent plunge like, and then felt as I were a-bein' drownded, and come down with a violent plunge and a crash, and water a-runnin' over my legs.

It were pitch dark; so I says, "Wherever am I? Why, I must 'ave been and pitched into the drain or somewheres," for the shores was all up in the Edgware Road.

At last I come to myself, and felt as I were a-settin' on the floor by my own bed-side.

So I flounders up, and strikes a lucifer, and it's a mercy as I'm alive to tell the tale, for if I 'adn't been and fell asleep with my feet in the 'ot water, as 'ad got cold and brought on them orful dreams, and 'ad smashed the footpan in my struggles agin death; but I'm sure as sich dreams means somethink or other, and that Claimint did ought to be warned, for all the rest of the night I kep' a-dreamin' and wakin' up by fits and starts, with that fat man a'-overin' about my bed, with 'is eyes 'arf out of 'is 'ead, a-glarin' at me like perlicemen's bull's-eyes.

It's werry well for that Miss Parminton for to say as dreams is rubbish, and only old women's ignorance. "But wot," I says, "look 'ow they 'ave come true, tho' certingly Mrs. Nimchin did dream three nights runnin' as 'er aunt 'ad set 'er night-cap borders a-fire over 'er book, and yet the old lady didn't wear nothink but a wusted one, and never was knowed to open a book; but I would 'ave my say, 'cos it were thro' a dream as my mother's fust cousin come to marry a whaler as 'ad only come ashore late Saturday night, and walked into their pew in chapel that werry Sunday mornin', as she dreamt she'd see 'im do, and was 'is wife under six weeks thro' 'im bein' obligated for to go off arter 'is whales, and never come back, as it was supposed must 'ave

floundered somewhere near the North Pole, as is a dangerous part; so I always do think as there's a somethink in dreams, the same as Maria Martin in the Red Barn, as I were a-sayin' jest now, let alone Faro and 'is brethren.

So let Miss Parminton 'ave 'er way, and I'll 'ave mine, and in course, if she don't like to believe in dreams, she needn't; but as I says, every one to their own way of thinkin'; not as I 'olds with the Mormons, nor yet the Shakers, and as to Joanna Soutcote, why, it always were foolishness from the werry fust, tho' I remember onee a-seein' one of 'er follerers, as dressed like a Quaker, with a beard, and always would set in a thoro' draft thro' a thunder storm, as in course did nobody no 'arm.

But as to dreams, I will say as when you come to dream like I 'ave over that Claimint, why, it ain't nay-bourly not to give 'im the 'int; and I says, "Why redicule any one as might prove right arter all?" and in course we all knows as dreams ain't no evidence, yet might be useful agin, as they 'ave been afore now. So I sticks to my pint, agin all the world for that matter, and them as sneers now may live to thank me.

I ain't one to be put out about nothiuk, but can't stand bein' set upon as the sayin' is, and partikler by that Claimint, nor yet 'is friends, and in course if Miss Parminton thinks he's the right man let 'er think it,

but not go a-lookin' down on any one else as may 'ave their opinions tho' not a-choosin' for to give 'em, so as to fly in the face of the Judge and Jury both, as might send you to prison for your pains.

I'm sure it ain't no difference to me whether he's Orton or not, all as I knows is as he must be some one, and let them as know 'im say so.

Miss Parminton she's got a jeerin' way with 'er thro' keepin' of a day school for young ladies, as pays fifteen shillin's the quarter, and that proud thro' 'avin' got twenty, as their ain't no settin' in the room with 'er of a Sunday evenin' when she werry often looks in on Mrs. Padwick in comin' from 'er chapel, as is of the Independent way of thinkin', and says she might 'ave settled over and over agin, only never would fix the day, or bring 'erself to say the words obey, thro' a fearin' of fortune-'unders, as 'ad a pension under government, as she would lose in marryin', as she made up with 'er little school ; so in course could come out dressed quite 'andsome of a Sunday, not as I 'olds with 'er taste as always runs into yallers and reds, and says she were a slim figger when a gal, as certainly must 'ave been a good while ago, and is now forty inches round the waist, as you can 'ear breathe across the street.

She may be a good scolard, no doubt, as is no reason why she should look down on any one as don't pretend to keep a school, yet could teach

needlework agin 'er any day, and did know the tambour stitch when a gal, as is very much gone out now, and 'ad a cousin as painted on welwet, as is a pair of bell ropes as must be in Lady Wittles bedroom now if the 'ouse ain't been pulled down since 'er death, as there was a talk about thro' wantin' it for the underground railway, as comes by the end of Portland Place, and shook the foundations very much.

So in course I knows wot edication is, and as to Miss Parminton askin' me plump and plain which was the largest island in the world afore a room full of people, did put me out as 'adn't the presence of mind like to tell 'er to mind 'er own busyness, nor yet to say Merryker, as I did ought to know something about, thro' 'avin' been over there, and a nice winter I 'ad for my pains as were a foolish thing in me to do.

But as to not knowin' jography, why, I knows it by art, and could tell you the names of a-many places as Miss Parminton never 'eard on, and wot's more never will, and in course don't pretend as I knows Horsetrailier, tho' I may go there afore I dies, and I'm sure I shan't arterwards, not even if they was to make a Gypshun Mummy of me.

As is things I'm up to thro' Brown bein' that fond of readin' 'ave put me up to a-many things in 'istory as can't a-bear Queen Lizzbeth for 'is part, nor yet that there Cromwell, as he always says were

a 'ard 'arted tyrant, and lived out Brompton way, for I well remember the lane myself as is close agin my first place, so in eourse knows 'istory.

With all 'er jeers she can't make out this 'ere Claimint is the man, as she 'as certainly stuck to 'im from the werry fust, and not a shillin' on it either way, but 'ave made up 'er mind thro' the cards, as she can tell fortunes by, not as I believe sich rubbish myself, but it were all thro' that as Mary Ann Rusby took and run away with the nigger as played the cymbals, thro' the cards always a-turnin' up a-black knave to 'er birthday as were the fifteenth of March, as were shown by a ten and a five comin' a-top of the knave.

I'm pretty sure as it were all thro' Mrs. Pelby 'avin' of 'er fortin' told arter supper, as would turn up black cards every time as means death, and that she were took with the palsy in the night, tho' she's livin' now and arty, all but shakin' of 'ead constant.

But as soon as ever Miss Parminton 'eard of this 'ere Claimint she 'ad the cards out and said as he must be the right man, cos of two red knaves a-comin' up together with a king as were dimons and arts.

So I says, "'Ow you can evcr give in to sich foolishness, Miss Parminton, at your age, surprises me, as is only fit for school gals, as I wouldn't allow

no dorter of mine to listen to sieh ignorant rubbish."

She says, "As to its bein' rubbish, Mrs. Brown, that's as parties thinks;" but she says, "as to ignorant, you'd better put your 'and afore your mouth as don't even know as Great Britin is a island, nor when it were first diseovered, any more than the stars."

I says, "My bein' ever so ignorant won't make them cards right, as is wot I calls presumption, a-tryin' to look into wot we was never intended to know;" but I says, "if you've proved as this 'ere Claimint is the right man go and show your eards to the Judge and Jury, and don't bother me, for all I wants is peace and quiet, as I'm a-goin' 'ome for to find thro' a nasty 'eadaehe as a anti-bilyus will take off, and not a bit of supper to-night for me."

So 'ome I goes and took my pills, as works wonders with the bile, and got up like the lark, as the sayin' is.

In course England was knowed a deal about afore it ever was diseovered to be a 'ighland, and did used to be called Britain, as there is Little Britain a-standin' to this day, as proves it, eos in course if there was a Little one there must have been a Great, close agin the Blooker Sehool, as wears yaller stoekins with no 'ats, as is 'ow young Wilkins got that bad 'ead, tho' I never will believe as it were

not neglect, and couldn't 'ave been that as killed 'im or else wotever would become of our butcher boy as goes bare-eaded from June to January, as the sayin' is.

But as I were a-sayin' it's ridiculous for Miss Parminton to say as she knowed that Claimint were the right man from them cards, cos if cards could tell, why, where would be the use of 'uman bein's brains as is give 'em for to find out things, and some day I shall jest wake Miss Parminton up by askin' of 'er a few questions afore Mrs. Rundell and Mrs. Grimley, as both 'ave got grandchildren at 'er school, as will put 'er on 'er mettle, as the sayin' is, and give 'er a lesson not to talk to me in that bouncin' way about jography, nor yet go and say both before my face and behind my back as I'm a werry good person in my way, but don't know nothink of 'istory.

As in course am no scolard, yet could tell 'er a good deal more than she knows, tho' 'er father is a printer, I dare say ; but as to the Romans a conkerin' the Inglish, that's all right, that is when they wore no clothes, as is the reason as no Brittins never, never, never, shall be slaves, as is wot King George promised Lord Nelson on 'is death bed, as is why he never would mancipate the Catholics as is the Roman's religion, while them Brittins always was true Protestants, like Queen Lizzybeth as brought

in the Reform Bill; but that won't never make rong right, and so I says, "if the Claimint is the Claimint let 'im show it, and I'm 'is friend for life, and there's a end of the matter;" but as to Miss Snapley a-turnin' on me sudden and askin' me wot I'd been and tellygraffed to Wally about, why I ain't no more tellygraffed 'im than the Pope, and just for the same reason as is cos I don't want 'im, thro' 'avin' 'ad enuf of 'im and 'is white 'at, but that's no reason as my life should be in danger thro' a foot-bath, as certainly might 'ave broke the same as a bason, for it's werry dangerous for any one to wash their feet in a wash-'and bason I considers, as is wot gave Mary Trinley the lock-jaw, poor thing, as cut thro' er arteries in jumpin' up sudden, thro' the second floor lodger a-comin' bustin' in the wuss for licker, as in course did ought to 'ave locked her door afore she thought of soakin' of 'er feet, tho' it were Saturday night, and no disgrace in that, tho' you'd think as some thought so thro' never a-doin' of it, but that's not my way.

When I'd got into bed with my feet in a flannin pettycot, and two shawls over 'em, I never shall forget the night as I 'ad thro' that foot-bath a-flyin' to my 'ead, and made me keep on a-dreamin' that orful, with that Claimint like a nightmare a-glarin' at me; the same as I've knowed some as always dreamt of the Royal Family afore troubles, and cer-

tingly I couldn't get Queen Wictoria out of my 'ead all that night afore the cistern bust, as flooded all along the passage into my back fust floor, and brought all the paper off the wall, as were aggrawatin', with the paper-'anger's back 'ardly turned, as it's luck I only put up a cheap one.

But as I were a-sayin', if dreams goes for anythink, as is 'ow the Red Barn murder were found out, then it 'll go 'ard with that Claimint; for arter that I were a-settin' in 'is Condemned Cell all that night, with 'im a-readin' wot were, I 'ope, a good book, considerin' of 'is circumstances, but might 'ave been the Noogate Calendar, as I believes they allows 'em as a consolation; the same as Dr. Dodd and Mr. Fontleroy, as my mother knowed a party as washed for 'im, and wore a clean frill-fronted shirt every day with a dimon brooch, as she got up the werry one as he were 'ung in, poor feller, and all thro' a-signin' of 'is name in the 'rong place, as is wot made King George wish as he'd never learnt to rite, and then might 'ave let Dr. Dodd off, as he would 'ave done, only as he'd 'ung so many afore, he wanted to make it a even number. But, thank goodness, that's all over now, tho' I do 'ope as they'll always 'ang murderers, as ain't fit to live, no more than wild beasts.

Well, as I were a-sayin', I certingly did feel for that Claimint, as I see as plain as a pikestaff, as the

sayin' is, tho' only a dream, a-settin' on 'is little bed as I couldn't 'elp a-wonderin' 'owever he could sleep in it. He busted into tears, and says, "Oh! Mrs. Brown, my more than mother, I ain't 'ad fair play over this 'ere caper, as it's only nat'ral I should want my own; ain't it, now?"

I says, "It is, indeed; but," I says, "why deny it when you went in the train with me?" for there he was a-settin' afore the werry same party as 'ad gone down to the Ile of Wight in the train.

He says, "You can save me if you will."

I says, "Law bless the man. 'Ow?"

"Why," he says, "speak to Queen Wictoria for me."

I says, "Bless 'er Royal 'art, she'd, no doubt, let you off the 'angin'; but she can't give you wot don't belong to 'er."

Well, then the place was all changed, and I were in Court; and there were the Judge a-settin' a-smokin' with the Jury, as says, "Don't be surprised, Mrs. Brown, but we're a-discussin' of it in a friendly sperrit whether to 'ang 'im Toosday or Thursday, thro' Toosday bein' Pancake-Day, as he might like onc aforc he dies."

"Well," I says, "it's the last thing as ever I should give a dyin' person, partikler as 'eavy as Mrs. Padwick made 'em last year, as would be werry un'-olesome."

Says the Judge, "Aren't you the woman as put arsenic in the dumplin's for 'er 'usband's supper, so as she might get 'is life insured?"

I give sich a start, as woke me up, but I says to myself, these 'ere ain't no common dreams, as I should like to ask the cunnin' man about as told Mrs. Pellet where 'er white lace wail were as she lost off 'er bonnet at 'Ampton races, cos I thinks to myself, if it should prove true, I might give that Claimint a 'int, and he'd preaps get off thro' a-turnin' King's evidence, and a-roundin' on them as put 'im up to this 'ere game, as ain't preaps a 'onerable hact, but life is sweet, and no doubt them as put 'im up to it is the wust, for they do say, if he was to get the day, he'd never get a fardin of the property, as is wot puzzles me why ever he should be livin' like fightin' cocks, as the sayin' is, now ; but preaps them parties as 'ave give the money wants to keep 'im in a good temper, or else he might keep all the property when he gets it jest to spite em, cos it is well beknown as he don't want nothink for 'issel, and would be a deal 'appier a-keepin' of a 'otel over in Horsetrailier and take a glass friendly with a customer.

Well, I was a-thinkin' it all over, 'arf asleep and awake, and was in Horsetrailier myself up in a bush, as were a werry unpleasant position for any one, I should say ; well, there I was, a-talkin' to a party as said he could come over and set it all square, but

never would, out of spite to the family, as 'ad reg'lar ronged 'im out of 'is money.

So I says, " Well, then tell me, as will go over and see both Judge and Jury ;" and there I was agin with Judge and Jury afore me ; so I says, " Collar this 'ere feller, and make 'im speak out."

Says the Judge, " Collar 'er, a interferin' old cat, and take and 'ang 'er at once."

I says, " Wot? 'ang me! Go and 'ang yourself."

But, law! they all seemed to tumble me about and get a rope round my neck, as I fought agin with all my might, but it kep' a-gettin' tighter and tighter, and jest with my last breath I give a violent scream, as woke me up, with the gal a-comin' runnin' into the room as 'ad brought me a drop of 'ot water, a-sayin', " Wotever is the matter ? "

It's well as she did come in, for I'd been and twisted the sheet like a rope round my neck that tight, and must 'ave been strangled in a minnit. So I'm sure I've 'ad enuf of the Claimint.

As to Mrs. Welding a-sayin' as it's all my own fault, I don't consider 'er the lady, nor yet naybourly, to say as I'm always a-goin' on about 'im, as am not, but do think as the law did ought to take its course, as the sayin' is, jest the same as a poor man would be obligated to ; and as to Queen Wictoria a-interferin', why, it ain't likely, tho' she did let 'em 'ang Muller, as were a Prooshun, jest like old Beastmark, as

wanted 'im let off scot free as the sayin' is, like all the rest of the Germans ; but Queen Wictoria knowed a trick worth two of that, partikler arter 'avin' the trouble to send all the way to Merryker for to bring 'im back, a willin, to murder a old man like that in a railway, and then cut off with 'is 'at.

So I thinks, wot with that and my dreams put together, it will go 'ard with 'im if they brings it 'ome to 'im, whether it's Woppin' or elsewherecs as they traccs 'im to ; tho' I must say as I should be sorry for the poor woman and children.

If he ain't the man, he'd better just take and lewant on the quiet, as he might do easy, a-sayin' as he were a-goin' down to Margit for 'is 'ealth, and then go out in a opin boat without no waterman, and change 'is clothes, as he might throw overboard, and step on to a rock, as would knock a 'ole easy in the bottom of the boat, and after that 'ail a vessel in passin' as were outward bound, and work 'is passage to the North Pole, and get round that way to Merryker, as they wouldn't never go to foller 'im, nor yet find 'im in, even if they did look arter 'im.

Not as they would dream he were alive, thro' a-pickin' up 'is clothes and the boat with the bottom stove in, and would tell a tale, and nat'rally think as he'd been and floundered at sea, with a large subscription got up for 'is widder and children, as would

be better without 'im than with 'im, as he could let 'em know on the quiet 'is little game, and might jine 'im in the baekwoods, and eome to be a great city in time, for that's the way as nearly all Merryker 'ave begun, as only shows that when one door shets another opens.

But I do 'ope as they won't go a-suppeenerin' me, for I should give 'em some werry short answers, I ean tell 'em, both sides ; and I ain't a-goin' to be put down by no Judges, as shall take my time and say my say, a-beginnin' at the right end, and jest a-askin' for the last person as ever see the other Tiehbung alive.

Cos it's easy to say as he went aboard of a ship, and were drownded, the same as my own godfather, as 'ad a narrer squeak for 'is life once or twiee afore he went down, poor feller, at last, and onee were the only man as was saved out of the erew, thro' a-elingin' to a 'en-eoop, as throwed 'im on a barrin roek ; but in eourse the moment he got to dry land told 'em all about it at the slop shop where he got 'is clothes, and were sent 'ome by the Inglish counsel over there.

So in course this 'ere Claimint, when he got ashore, must 'ave got 'is slops, and 'ave gone to the Inglish eounsel over there, or some one, and in course would get a sheet of paper and a antelope, and rite 'ome to 'is dear ma as he'd 'ad a narrer escape, least-

ways that's wot my Joe did the time as he run agin a icebug in fust goin' over to Canader; and if he 'adn't, I should 'ave given it to 'im 'ot, I can tell you, by the werry next mail.

So would nat'rally this 'ere Claimint's ma, or any one else as is a mother; leastways that's my opinion, as is wot I rote to the Judge, and shall send it to Queen Wictoria 'erself, as reads everythink, and thro' bein' a mother will agree; for, in course, if 'er son as 'ave took to the 'sea 'ad been wrecked and swum ashore, the fust thing as he'd 'ave done would be to send a line 'ome, if only by the pilot, as always comes ashore fust, and will post a letter with pleasure, as is 'ow Brown's own sister 'eard as that boy Alfred of 'ern 'ad come 'ome from Horsetrailier when just off Plymouth, as it took 'em over three weeks to get into the river thro' fogs and contrairy winds, as 'ave certingly made a man of 'im, and a good sailor too, as may die a admiral.

Tho' some do say as it's only the merchant service, as is a 'onerable one too, and 'ave made large fortunes, for I well remembers a old East Indy captaining as lived out Poplar way as come 'ome with a fortin' and drunk 'issel to death within three years, as were the time he'd took 'is cottage for, and 'ad six months to run the day he were berried, as shows 'ow little we knows wot is a-goin' to 'appen, as is wot I said to Mrs. Grimley when 'er dorter came 'ome to 'er with

three gals total unprovided, and must 'ave starved but for a uncle as set 'er up with a sewin' machine, as was a livin' for the lot, and married well in the end, though one were a clump foot, but in the tannin' trade, and the other two 'olesale leather-sellers, and no wonder, for they was all three downright beauties, and as good as they was 'an'some, and kep' their mother in comfort, and never let their grandmother want for 'er comforts, thro' 'avin' stood their friend in need, as is a friend indeed, as the sayin' is. So all as I've got to say to that Claimint is, work it while you can, but not if you can prove as it's all false-'oods as they've said agin you, then stand to your guns like 'arts of hoak, and Brittins strike 'ome, with Rule Brittanier ; and no one won't be better pleased to wish you luck than Martha Brown, not as I espects to be asked to dinner with swells at the West End ; but if he should give his friends at Woppin' tea and srimps any time at Greenwich, why, I should be glad to make one, as I'm cheerful in a gen'ral way, partikler over meals with a family party like Christmas day, as merry 'appy returns of the day, and do 'ope as we shall enjoy it with this 'ere Claimint off our minds one way or the other, for he's a reg'lar worret and wexation, as no doubt Queen Victoria feels 'im to be, and can't abear the sight of the noose-paper of a Sunday mornin', thro' 'avin' sich a job afore 'er to read it all ; and 'owever she can carry it

in 'er 'ead, poor dear lady, I can't think, with sich a lot of other things to bother 'er, as well she may say as uneasy is the 'ead as wears my crown, and were 'er werry words at 'er coronation, when she took 'er oath to it, and will stick by it like a true queen and a good woman as she is, and will let that Claimint 'ave justice, jest the same as any other convict as ever lived with or without a ticket.

I really did think as Miss Parminton would 'ave busted with rage when she flounced into Mrs. Padwick's front kitchen, as ain't a kitchen, but fitted up for a breakfast room like, where she sets in a gen'ral way, with the 'ouse full of lodgers.

So I says, "Mussy on us, Miss P., wotever is the matter with you? 'Ave you 'ad a offer?"

She only give me a glary look, and says, "No; but my blood's on the bile, as every 'onest Inglish woman's did ought to be, when rongs is bein' done."

"Oh!" I says, not a-knowin' wot she were a-drivin' at, tho' I certingly did fancy it were some fresh wagary over that there Claimint.

"Oh!" she says, "you'll be delighted in course, cos it's fresh prosecutions of a innocent man."

I says, "Go on; let's 'ear wot it is."

"Why," she says, "them lawyers 'ave been and took away all the Claimint's papers, so as he can't prove who he is."

“Ah!” I says, “he didn’t ought never to ‘ave parted with them, but ‘ave kep’ ‘em the same as I do my marridge lines, at the back of my corner drawer, where my fine things and stockin’s, as is always under lock and key; but,” I says, “do you mean to say as that’s what the judges and ‘Turney-Gen’ral ‘ave been and done?”

“Oh!” she says, “they’re all agin ‘im; and I do believe if they dared to, would put ‘im on the rack.”

I says, “Go on with your rubbish.”

She says, “You needn’t be insultin’”

“Oh!” I says, “no insults didn’t ought to be took where none is intended, tho’ I must say as I do not believe as that there Judge would keep back no papers; and if so, why not write and complain to Queen Wictoria, as would soon see it all set right, I’m sure.”

So she says, “As you’re so clever, preaps you’ll write the letter, as in course Her Majesty would read, if she saw as it were from you.”

I says, “Hcr Majesty, bless ‘er Royal ‘art, is quite the lady, so in course would read wot any other lady rote ‘er, tho’ not seated upon the same ‘igh spear with ‘er, as in my opinion there ain’t no onc to come near ‘er.”

Says Miss P., “And pray wot would you say if you was to rite?”

"Why," I says, "in course I should think it well over fust; not as I should ask Brown, cos he'd put it behind the fire to a dead certainty."

I didn't say no more then, cos Mr. Mollins come in, as is a relation of Mrs. Padwick's, tho' not by the same side as me, and flies in such a rage if the Claimint is mentioned, as he can't contain 'issself, as the sayin' is, and threatened for to lock up 'is own wife in the coal-cellar if she didn't drop the subjic, and turned out the gas to stop it jest as they was a-takin' of their grog one Sunday evenin' arter supper with four or five friends dropped in promiscous, and all would go on about Tichbung, as come up on the carpet, as the French say.

So in course I didn't breathe a syllabub, and Miss Parminton, as is 'is niece, 'ad to shet up, as was a muss; but I wasn't a-goin' to be talked to like that, so I drawed up a letter as I shouldn't be ashamed for Queen Wictoria to read, and might put 'er up to a thing or two, as can't know everythink as is a-goin' on, and can't 'ave 'ad time to go thro' all that Tichbung case like we 'ave 'ad a nice time, with a-follerin' of 'im up, and been always right in the main, as the sayin' is.

So wot I said I stuck to, and took and rote out wot I should say if Queen Wictorier was to say to Gladstin or any on 'em, "Whyever does Mrs. Brown talk so

much about Tichbung, if she knows no more about 'im than me?"

So in writin' would say "Oh ! my Grashus Majesty, excuse the liberty as I'm takin' in a-takin' up my pen, as is not mine esactly, thro' borrhored of the fust floor lodgers, as will never miss it, thro' bein' from the country and out for the day, as will put it back long afore they comes in, as will be a 'eavy tea, as is no doubt a thing as Your Majesty 'ave took in travellin', tho' in a gen'ral way you do start arter your late dinner, as wot is it but a supper arter all, as some considers a un'olesome meal, and calls it dinner instead.

" And while I'm a-writin', I may as well mention as that there report about my death weren't true, but only thro' jealousy on their parts, as would like to see me and Brown by the years, as they will see if they looks out.

" But as I were a-sayin', I am not one to borrh and not return, so shall put the pen back, as is why I don't put none of my money in them French fun's as they calls 'em ; but I don't like no jokin' about business, partikler where there's money in the case.

" Not but wot Brown and me would both lend Your Grashus Majesty anythink as we've got by us ; so never be put in a corner for a fiver, nor yet a tenner, while we're above ground.

“But as I were a-sayin’, none of your red republicins for us, as don’t ‘old with all the tears as France could produce, as the Germans don’t care about, and the English don’t pay no attention to.

“Not as I should think of ritin’ to Your Grashus Majesty as Mrs. Brown presents ‘er ‘umble dooty to, only but for others as ‘ave their rongs, tho’ I think as they ‘as their rights, the same as every Englishman, as you nat’ral espects will do ‘is dooty.

“But as I were a-sayin’, this ‘ere Claimint, as may be a barrernite all over, tho’ not covered with them tattoo marks as was said to be on ‘im, tho’ not preaps eperient to the naked eye, as I knowed a sailor myself with a mermaid on ‘is breast-bone, and the sun and moon and seven stars, as is the ‘eavenly bodies, all over ‘is chest, as wouldn’t never ‘ave been known but for wearin’ of ‘is shirt-front open, as I’ve see ‘im myself with, along the wall of Whitechapel workus, with a beautiful paintin’ on it, while the wind were a-blowin’ enuf to cut you in ‘arf, and sleet a-drivin’ as ‘ard as ‘ail.

“So in course when this ‘ere Claimint comes for to be tried, and will in course plead guilty to bein’ perjured, as is wot he did own to at Westminster ‘All, yet might ‘ave spoke ‘asty, as any one might when flustered, as ain’t like a-makin’ a speech, where you ‘as it all cut and dried, as the sayin’ is ; and

I'm sure them lawyers is enuf to make any one swear black is white, and would jest serve 'em right if you was to slip down on the quiet some mornin' with a deep wail over your face, and 'ear 'em, as I do believe you'd send 'em for a month at the werry least.

"Not as you're one of them queen's as sets at 'ome and believes all as them lords and ladies tells you, as might stuff you up with any rubbish, if it wasn't as you sees all them Sunday papers, cos I dare say you're a deal too 'urried for to 'ave a good spell at 'em ev'ry mornin'; not but wot the family bein' growed up must be a great thing off your royal mind, and now as there's only two left, and they're a-gettin' on, and 'appy to 'ear as Leopold is a deal stronger and couldn't believe my eyes when a-seein' as that there young lady's fottygraft in the shop winders 'ad Princess Beatrice rote under it, as only shows 'ow time flies.

"But all as that Claimint can espect is as the law should take its course; not as I'm one as 'olds with 'angin' any one under murder, as I considers a dooty, even if I did it with my own 'ands, as is wot I 'ave 'eard say as Your Majesty must do with your own royal fingers if anythink were to 'appen sudden to Calcraft, and the sherrifs was both out of the way, tho' in course it's a job as none of them young princes wouldn't stand by and see you do; not as

you'd flinch from it if they did, thro' bein' one as, like myself, would go thro' fire and water, and even 'angin', if it was your dooty.

"But in course they'll recommend 'im to mercy, cos of 'is young family; and I do 'ope as they'll take warnin' by their father's fate, and never run away from 'ome, nor yet if they should get tattooed even by a lord as they goes to school with, as they won't deny it, nor yet forget their wulgar tung, nor take away any one's character, tho' it may be a near relation, nor yet take up and go to music 'alls with Wally, as is wot 'ave set many agin 'im, no doubt, but won't make a pin's-'ead difference to Your Grashus Majesty when a-signin' of 'is warrant, as no doubt will be'ave well and get 'is ticket in no time, and feel more at 'ome over there than bein' a barrernite, unless they can bring it 'ome to 'im, as then in course will gain the day, and be proud of them estates, as I 'ave 'eard say is a-goin' to be turned into a railway-station close agin 'Igh 'Oburn where Middle Row did used to stand; and I'm sure if ever Your Grashus Majesty did want to know anythink as I could put you up to, Mrs. Brown will be 'appy to wait on Queen Wictorier with any lady in the land. So no more at present from yours till death."

I 'adn't 'ardly time for to finish that letter afore Mrs. Bewlay come in so I put it away careful in

the cyclerpédier for to keep it flat, and never give it a thought, thro' 'avin' promised Jane Headley as I'd go with 'er to 'ave 'er eye-teeth took out, as 'ave been knowed to bleed to death.

I'm sure Jane Headley needn't 'ave come to ask me to go along with 'er, for I can't abear them sights ever since that time as I see poor Mrs. Yardley 'ave the crescent cut out as growed in 'er 'ead, and done in a jiffey, thro' the doctor bein' that 'andy, as is wonderful to see.

So I says, "Jane, you 'ave got a mother as is that experienced as any daughter might look to, and arter all said and done, a tooth ain't much to lose; tho' I must say I think it was a downright disgrace in that feller near Gravel Lane for to let 'is 'prentice-boy try 'is 'and on old Mrs. Robbins, and pull out two back ones with one twist, as was the only sound ones as she could 'ope to get thro' a crust with, and left the one as was gone in 'er 'ead, as she's kep' to this day, thro' bein' the best as she's got, tho' bad's the best, as the sayin' is."

Well, she says to me, "It's close by St. Martin's Church, and a dentist as anyone might trust, and it will be a nice outin' for you."

I says, "Thank you, Jane, but when I wants a outin', thank goodness, I can get one without bein' took to a dentist, as the very sight of the chair is enough for me."

She says, "Mother can't go, for she's sure to faint at the mention of blood, let alone the sight."

I says, "More fool your mother, as is what I calls givin' way foolish to wot may 'appen to anyone any day, thro' a knife slippin', or even your nose in 'ot weather, as sometimes keeps off a fit."

I'm sure I was a-goin' along jest by Long Acre, and see a crowd a-runnin' along by the side of a cab a'-oorayin'.

So I asks a boy wot it were all about? He says, "Why, that's the Claimint in that cab."

I says, "Go along with your rubbish. That ain't the Claimint, as I knows 'im well."

Says a feller a-turnin' round, "Do you mean to say it ain't 'im?"

Says another, "Bring 'er along. We'll make 'er prove 'er words."

I give a scream, and says, "Perlice!" but there wasn't no perlice near; and if three or four of them roughs didn't take and send me agin a shop-door with sich violence as it flew open, and down I set on the step.

They run off, and out come the man, as shook me by the shoulder, and said, "Now, look 'ere; if you comes 'ere agin, you'll be locked up, for you've been bound over twice to keep away."

I gets up and looks at 'im, and then he see 'is

mistake, but didn't take and beg my parding, but only took and 'bused me for bustin' in 'is door.

I couldn't 'ardly speak afore he banged the door to ; so I looks round for Jane, but couldn't see 'er nowhere's about.

Jest as I were a'-esitatin' wot to do, a woman come up as squinted orful, as is always a sign of bad luck, and says, a-comin' close up to me, "Excuse me, mum ; did I 'ear you say jest now, in passin', as you knowed the Claimint well ?"

I says, "Only by sight, tho' I don't say as I could swear to 'im."

"Then," she says, "I beg your parding, for I wanted some one as could ;" and off she 'urries, and turned down a court in a instant ; and if she 'adn't been and took my watch, as, tho' silver, I walued like gold, thro' bein' a legersy ; but, thro' a-feelin' as I were in that neighbour'ood as might drag me down a court and grotter me afore I knowed where I were, I 'urries on, thankful as it weren't no wuss, for wot is a watch arter all, compared with your life, or even the gold as your teeth is set in, as I knowed a party as were robbed on it in open day, near the Shoreditch Station, thro' the waggerbones a-seezin' 'im by the scruff of the neck, and forced the teeth out of 'is 'ead, gold-plate and all, and lewanted with the lot while he were a-chokin', and parties in passin' thought as them

fellers was friends a-pattin' 'im on the back, thro' somethink 'avin' gone the wrong way.

In course I lost sight of Jane Headley, and went 'ome without 'er, nat'rally thinking as she'd went 'ome with 'er tooth out, and were reg'lar knocked over when 'er mother come in like a flamin' turkey-cock, a-sayin', "Wherever is my gal?"

I says, "I ain't see your gal, as went off and left me in the lurch, as the sayin' is."

She says, "Oh! you base, deceitful ooman, as 'ave been a-playin' into 'er 'ands, and knows full well as she's off with your own nevvy."

I says, "Wot nevvy?"

"Why," she says, "Tom Appleby."

I says, "He ain't no nevvy of mine; and I don't believe as he'd go and throw 'issel away on a gal like yourn."

She says, "Wot 'ave you got to say agin my gal?"

I says, "Nothink; only that she ain't no wife for a penniless boy; and as to me 'avin' anythink to do with it, I'm sure I never 'ad."

"Well, then," she says, "I begs your parding; and if the gal's made a fool of 'erself, I can't 'elp it."

She 'adn't 'ardly spoke, when in come Jane, with 'er 'ead tied up, and 'er tooth in a bit of paper,

the size of a cob nut, and 'owever they got it out I can't think; so I made 'em 'ave their tea, and poor Jane's 'ead ached that bad as I made 'er go and lay down, with some 'ot bread-and-milk for to soothe it.

And when she were gone, I says to 'er mother, "Bless your 'art, you wouldn't ketch me a-interferin' about no marridges; for I'm sure the mess I got into about that Jane Watson's marryin', and no more to do with it than the babe unborn, as the sayin' is."

But as to Mrs. Watson, 'er and me 'adn't spoke for over three months, thro' words about a gownd, when she come in early one day, with a eye as meant mischief thro' glarin', and dress that 'ansom in a puce-coloured merino, as was all the go, and a Shantilly wail as never were bought under seven guineas, and cheap at that.

She set on the hedge of the chair, and kep' 'er wail down for to 'ide the small-pox, as 'ave made dreadful ravishes in 'er face, as the sayin' is, and swep' away one eyebrow, as burnt cork don't 'ide.

I ain't one to bear no malice, besides I 'adn't begun the quarrel, and didn't care about the gownd, whether it were dyed or not, and shouldn't wish to, thro' 'avin' knowed 'er 'ard on seven-and-twenty years, when fust she married.

So I says, "Well, Mrs. Watson, you've come to

see me at last," as was the fust time as she'd ever darkened my doors in my new 'ouse.

"Yes," she says, "Mrs. Brown, I've come; but," she says, "it's only to tell you what I thinks on your conduct, as is downright disgraceful. 'Ow dare you," says she, "go and encourage my gal to do such a thing, and only your nasty, mean spite, for to worret me ?"

Well, she talked that fast as I could not stop 'er till she was obligated to take breath; then I says, "Mrs. Watson, if you've come 'ere to quarrel and 'ave words, as I consider low-lived, I wish as you'd step it, for I won't 'ave none on it."

She says, "Oh ! you wile old woman !"

I says, "Old indeed ! When I dies of old age, you'll quake for fear, as the sayin' is," a-knownin' 'er to be a good seven years the start of me, as she was touchy about, thro' bein' many years older than 'er 'usband, as was the cause of 'er jealousy.

She says, "I should like to make you quake, as it will come 'ome to you, as 'ow you could do it, thro' bein' a mother yourself, and 'as known what it is for to 'ave a daughter marry surreptitious."

I says. "Mrs. Watson, if you've come 'ere to insult me over my daughter Jane, as certingly did marry unbeknown, tho' it's turned out well, thro' 'im a-'avin' four pounds a week reg'lar salary, and as steady a man as ever drawed breath," I says,

“you’d better look at ’ome, for I’m sure the time as your own gal wastes a-talkin’ over the gate to the potboy, as I can see from my back winder, nobody wouldn’t credit.”

I could a bit my tongue off for a-sayin’ it, for I see as I should get the poor gal into trouble, as ’er mother leaves at ’ome solintary by the whole day.

She flew out, a-sayin’, “ You turn agin’er, do you, arter encouragin’ ’er every way ? ”

I says, “ Me encouragin’ er ? Wotever do you mean ? ” I says. “ Why, I ain’t spoke to ’er since New Year’s Day, as I met ’er accidental.”

She says, “ You ’aven’t ? ”

“ No,” I says ; “ certingly not.”

“ Then,” she says, “ you mean to say as she wasn’t married from your ’ouse while I was at Margate, from Friday to Monday on a Sunday mornin’ ? ”

I says, “ Mrs. Watson, mum, you must be a-dreamin’. I never knowed she was married even ; but certingly, if it’s the potboy, he’s only acted ’onorable, for they’ve been a-courtin’ this two year I should say, and more.”

“ Then you did know about it ? ” she says.

I says, “ In course, ’avin’ of my eyes with my back winders flat upon your gate, I couldn’t ’elp it. But,” I says, “ you don’t mean to say as they’re

married? Why, she's not seventeen, and he can't be a year older."

She lifts up 'er wail, and I see the tears a-streamin' down her cheeks; so I says, "Don't take on so, that's a dear, but bear up. Things may take a turn, and, tho' a potboy, may be a good 'usband arter all."

So she says, "Never in this world, for," she says, "he's took tobettin' and all manner, and I'm told as he's got a wife already."

"What!" I says, "that bandy-legged waggerbone?"

"Yes," she says, "he were original a drummer-boy, as lost his character, and was drummed out of the regiment; and I'm told he treats 'er shameful."

I says, "'Ow long 'ave they been married?"

"Why," she says, "it's 'ard on five months, for I was at Margate in July, and 'ere we are with Christmas close on us."

I says, "Why, I've seen 'er at your gate within the last fortnight, I'm sure."

"Yes," she says; "I 'adn't no suspicions, till I found as she'd gone off one arternoon, without a word, while my back was turned; and then the milkwoman told me all about it, and made sure as you know'd about it."

I says, "Mrs. Watson," I says, "I do con-

sider as you left that gal too much alone, without no one to speak to but that old Mrs. Seymour, as is a downright waggerbone, as is well known, and no doubt put 'er up to all manner; but as to me encouragin' of 'er with the potboy, it's a thing as I wouldn't stoop to was it ever so."

"Well," she says, "they're married; and wot-ever 'er father 'll say when he 'ears it, as I espects 'ome every day, I can't think, as is that proud as he'd think a Duke nothink to 'is daughter."

Well, I was a-thinkin' what a fool he must be, but didn't say nothink, for he's only fust mate aboard of a vessel as is in the timber-trade; but certingly a potboy is a come-down in the world; not but wot I'd rather call "pots" to my dyin'-day than take to the sea.

So she says, "I don't know what to do."

I says, "You can't do nothink but grin and bear it, as the sayin' is."

She says, "I believe you're right; but Watson 'll break 'is neck as sure as ever he ketches 'im."

"Well," I says, "that 'll be sensible, as 'll get 'issel into trouble, and make 'is child a widder, as you 'll 'ave to keep. Now," I says, "you take my adwice, and make the best on it, and try and get 'im to be steady."

"Oh!" she says, "I'll never see 'er, not if she

was a-layin' rottin' at my door, a disgraceful 'ussy."

So I see it wasn't no use a-talkin' to 'er no more.

She says, "That's a good soul; do come and 'ave a cup of tea along with me, I am that dull and lonesome."

Well, Brown were not a-comin' 'ome, thro' it bein' Wednesday; so I says, "I'll come;" and she waited while I put my bonnet on, and we walked over to 'er place together. I wanted 'er to stop and 'ave tea with me, but she said as she didn't like to be out of the way, as she wasn't never sure when Watson might turn up.

I don't think as I'd finished my first cup, when Mrs. Watson says, "'Ere he is!"

Well, I was a little took aback, for he wasn't no great favourite of mine, thro' bein' one of them drinkin', swearin' characters as Brown never would associate with.

He'd been away over ten months, and I'm sure you'd 'ave thought as they'd only parted in the mornin', to see the way as they met; not as I'm one for much slobberin' and kissin', as often covers deceit, but I do like to see man and wife be'ave civil to one another.

He didn't take much notice of me, and wouldn't 'ave no tea, but only rum-and-water; and 'adn't

been in the 'ouse five minnits when he says, "Where's the gal?"

'Is wife she turned that deadly pale as give me quite a turn to see.

He says, "What's the matter? Is she ill?"

I says, "No, she's not ill;" for I see as Mrs. Watson couldn't answer.

"Then," he says, "where is she?"

She says, "Oh, Watson! it ain't my fault. Indeed it ain't."

"What ain't your fault?" he says, lookin' a downright savage, and a-smellin' that strong of the vessel as give me quite a turn.

She says, "Why, she's run away."

"What!" he says. "Then it's your cruelty as 'ave drove 'er to it." And he flew at 'er like a tiger, and ketched 'old of 'er arm, and shook 'er that violent as 'er teeth chattered agin.

I says, "Mr. Watson, sir, listen to reason, and let go your wife's harm. Your gal's been and got married unbeknown."

"Married!" he hollars. "Who to? who to?"

I says, "Not knowin', cannot say."

He turns on 'is wife agin, and says, "Who is the willin' as 'as 'ticed 'er away from 'er 'ome?"

By that time Mrs. Watson was come round a bit, and she says, "Don't be so violent, and I'll tell you. He's a young man in the name of Sin-

field, as was at the 'Queen's 'Ead,' round the corner."

"Owned the 'ouse ?" says he.

"No," she says ; "only the potboy."

I thought as he'd 'ave felled 'er like a ox, as he didn't seem 'ardly able for to keep 'is 'ands off 'er.

He says, "Pretty care you took of my child, you wile, false woman!"

And then I found out for the fust time as she wasn't own mother to the gal, as certingly was enuf to aggravate the man the more.

He didn't say no more, but swallers down 'is drop of rum-and-water, and goes out of the room.

As soon as ever 'is back was turned, she says to me, "He'll commit murder ; I'm sure he will."

In he come agin in a minnit or two, with a thick stick, and says, "Where do they live?"

She says, "I don't know."

He says, "It's a lie!"

She says, "I declare I don't."

"Well," he says, "if you won't tell me, there's others as will ;" and out he goes.

I says, "Ain't you no idea where she is?"

She says, "No ; she only wrote on a bit of paper as I've got 'ere, 'Jane Sinfield. Married the 7th July. Stepney Church.'" There it was rote plain enuf.

She says, "If Watson finds out as I was away

from 'ome, it's as much as my life's worth, tho' I was along with my own sister and 'er family."

"Well," I says, "I can't do you no good, and must wish you good evenin'; and, if you wants me, you knows where to find me."

She says, "I'll go to my sister, for I ain't a-goin' to wait 'ere to be 'arf-murdered when he comes in the wuss for licker."

I didn't say nothink, for I don't 'old with interferin' 'twixt man and wife; so I wishes 'er well thro' 'er troubles, and 'ome I goes.

Brown come in afore nine, and we 'ad our supper at once, thro' 'im bein' rather sharp set; and we was a-settin' talkin' about them Watsons, when I 'eard a knock at the door, and the gal come in and says, "Please, mum, you're wanted." Out I goes, and there stood that Jane Watson—leastways, Jane Sinfield, I should say.

"Oh!" she says, "Mrs. Brown, 'elp me!" and down she fell in a fit.

Brown he come out a-'earin' the noise, and carried 'er into the front parlour, and laid 'er on the sofy, while I told the gal to run for the doctor.

Afore he come, I did all I could for to bring the life back into 'er, but it wasn't no use; and when he did come, he shook 'is 'ead, and says, "You'd better send 'er 'ome."

I says, "I don't know where she lives."

"Well," he says, "you may 'ave 'er left on your 'ands, and it's a bad case."

So Brown and me 'ad a bit of a talk, and agrees as we'd take 'er in, for I was afraid to send 'er to 'er father's that night.

We got 'er to bed, and she was that convulsed as I never see anythink wuss.

I sent the gal over to see if Mrs. Watson was at 'ome, but the 'ouse was all dark, and she couldn't make nobody 'ear.

So there wasn't nothink for it but to let 'er stop where she was, and so 'ad all the trouble and expense to bear, tho' the child didn't live but jest long enuf to be christened; and, when that poor young thing were about agin, she'd got work to go to with the sewin' machine, and paid the nuss 'erself; and as to the doctor, he be'aved 'an'some, and wouldn't take a farden; but, I says, it's been that lesson to me as you won't never ketch me even a-countenancin' no runaway matches, as might come 'ome to me the same as Jane Watson did, as is 'ard lines; but Brown were away nearly all the time, or else I couldn't 'ave done it.

Mrs. Headley she took all as I'd said in good part, as the sayin' is, and took Jane 'ome in a cab, and it turned out all rubbish about Tom Appleby, as 'ad only give 'er a kiss under the missletoe, as is ways I don't 'old with, thro' always bein' brought

up that partikler for to keep a young man at 'is distance, even when he asked me to name the day

I'm sure I shouldn't 'ave give that there Claimint another thought till a-tryin' to get in at the Old Bailey for the trial, as some thinks won't never come off, only for Miss Parminton a-comin' worretin', and gettin' it out of me as I'd drawed up a letter to Queen Wictorier, as she coaxed me into showin' of 'er, as she said I must let 'er show to the ladies as were a Committee for to try if that there Claimint were the man as he said he was.

"Wot?" I says, "like a jury of matterns, I suppose?"

"Oh!" she says, "I ain't a mattern!"

"Oh!" I says, "but quite old enuf for to be one."

She says, "Won't you jine?"

I says, "No, thank you."

"Well, then," she says, "let me show 'em your letter to the Queen."

I says, "Miss Parminton," I says, "'avin' rote to Queen Wictorier, I ain't a-goin' to send 'er letter to anyone else; but," I says, "I don't mind a-readin' of it to them ladies on the quiet, if you will say when I may 'ave that 'oner. But," I says, "jest excuse me a minnit while I looks for my letter, as," I says, "ain't yet 'rote out clear."

So I takes it out of the book where I'd put it,

jest as I'd left it, and as smooth as glass, as the sayin' is, and jest give 'er a bit of a taste on it, as in course made 'er long to 'ear more ; but I pertended as I didn't care about lettin' anyone see it, tho' in course I shouldn't like for it to be knowed, or else I shouldn't never 'rite to Queen Wictorier, nor yet anyone else.

So she says, " Oh ! do let them ladies 'ear it, that's a dear."

" Well," I says, " even if I was to give it to you, 'ow could they 'ear ? for you ain't told me where to find 'em."

" Well," she says, " we're a-goin' to meet, jest six on us, over a cup of tea, at Mrs. Garsting's, this werry evenin' at five, as will be proud to see you, I knows."

It were a good bit off, thro' bein' College Street, Camdin Town ; but she said as we could go by the bus to King's Cross, and then the tram for tuppence would set us down at the door.

I can't say as I relished goin', but, as I always say, fair play's a jewel, and, in course, I'm game to give that Claimint fair play, jest the same as the Judge and Jury ; so I says, " I'm with you," and off we went.

Certingly them trams is great improvements on the buses, thro' bein' easy to get in at ; and, tho' they smells of camphine, not over-crowded like

Merryker, where they all crowds in, and stands up in front of you a double row, a-chewin' and spittin' all the way, as is ruination to your clothes, and reg'lar stiflin'; tho' I will say as the gents is werry perlite in gettin' up for a lady to take their seats.

When we got to Great College Street, as is a part I never 'eard on, I were took aback for to see 'ow they've been and built all over up by Old St. Pancras Church, as is streets upon streets where there was all fields when I was young, and Copyagen 'Ouse stood where the Cattle-Market is, and nobody wouldn't know the place agin, as seems to me to be all coal-merchants' carts all over the place.

I was all amazement a-lookin' at the part, as I ain't see for over thirty year, when we stopped, and out I got, a-follerin' Miss Parminton up to a 'ouse as were wot I calls shabby-genteel, and in the parlour there was three a-settin' with the tea-things afore 'em, as was three old dowdies, as all begun a-maggin', and as soon as Mrs. Brown's name were huttered, they was all around me, a-sayin' as they was that pleased for to see me, and whether I'd like to take my bonnet off? as I says, "No, I thank you," to; so 'ad tea accordin', as wasn't no great shakes, and the beastliest butter as ever I did taste, and wot else can you expect in Camdin Town,

with all the fields built over, as did used to be a mask of butter-cups.

So, when we'd 'ad tea, Miss Parminton begun a-talkin' about me all reg'lar flummery, a-sayin' as I were a great leader of thought, as even Bishops looked up to, and whyever shouldn't I settle this 'ere Tichbung case ?

I says, " You'll excuse me, Miss Parminton, as is the last of my thoughts ; and, in course, ladies, you knows as well as me as not even Queen Wictorier couldn't settle it without Parlyment for to 'elp 'er, and it ain't likely as I'm a-goin' to set myself agin both Queen and Parlyment ; but," I says, " all I wants is fair play, and that's why," I says, " I wants this 'ere Claimint for to 'ave proper defence, like the werry wust, as they gives a fair trial to, even when they pleads 'Not Guilty,' as they knows is a false'ood all the time, but the Judge he winks at 'em, and so does the Jury, as is only a matter of forms, as the sayin' is."

Says Miss Parminton, " Would you mind a-readin' to these ladies wot you've been and wrote to Queen Wictorier ? "

Says the old gals, "'Ear, 'ear."

I says, " I will read it ; but, in course, it is well understood as no one won't repeat it, as might come to Queen Wictorier's ears in a roundabout way

as would feel 'urt at me not a-sendin' the letter fust 'and."

"Oh!" says Miss Parminton, "were all tiled 'ere. Ain't we, ladies?"

They all says, "Oh, dear, yes!"

"Well, then," I says, "I'll read;" and puts my 'and in my pocket to pull it out; and if it wasn't gone!

I says, "I've been and dropped it somewherees about the room."

Well, we all set to work to look for it; but all in wain.

I says, "I must 'ave dropped it in the tram, and thro' not a-bein' directed, in course, if found, won't be posted to Queen Wictorier, not even thro' the dead letter hoffice, as is always on Her Majesty's service."

Says Miss Parminton, "Wherever can you 'ave dropped it? Oh! what a pity!" and a lot more like that.

So I says, "Well, never mind; it's no use a-cryin' over spilt letters, as the sayin' is."

"Don't you think as preaps you may 'ave left it at 'ome?" says Miss Parminton; "or," she says, "couldn't you remember a lot on it, as I'd rite it out myself?"

I says, "Oh! dear no; but," I says; "let me 'ear what these ladies 'as got to say."

“ Well,” says one, “ wot we proposes is a penny subscription by the women of Ingland for to get the Claimint ’is lawful rights.”

I says, “ You means a fair ’earin’, as is the way as I’ve ’eard say as they put up Hercules in the park to the Dook of Wellington, and my dear mother give a penny ’erself, and should certingly ’ave done so myself, only, thro’ bein’ under a twelvemonth, were not awares of wot were a-goin’ on, tho’ I do think as them denuded figgers is best indoors myself.”

Say one of them ladies, as were a Miss Purfitt, “ Will you subscribe ? ”

I says, “ A penny ain’t nothink, so in course I will ; but,” I says, “ if that’s all, I’ll be a-movin’ ’omewards.”

Says Miss Parminton, “ Mind, if you finds your letter to Queen Wictorier, we’re to ’ave it.”

I says, “ Only a-readin’, remember.”

“ Oh, that will do,” says Miss Parminton, with a giggle.

So I says, “ Ladies, I wishes you a werry good evenin’, a-stickin’ to my motter, ‘ May the best man win ; ’ ” and out of the room I walks, for I did not care about them old parchment things, as were not friendly, and didn’t take nothink arter tea, aperiently.

So out I goes, and the gal showed me out, and

'adn't got not fifty yards down the street when I remembers my umbreller, and back I 'urries.

Jest as I got to the door the gal come out, so I 'adn't no occasions to knock, as she were a-goin' on a errand, and I walks into the passage.

The parlour door stood on the jar, as the sayin' is, and I 'eard 'em all a-larfin' 'arty, and didn't 'ear me tap.

Jest then one says, "She can't be sich a reg'lar old fool as to rite sich rubbish to the Queen."

Them words made me start; and then I 'eard that double-tongued wiper, Miss Parminton, say, "Oh yes, she does; she thinks she rites beautiful, and that's why I decoyed 'er out with it, and then picked 'er pocket in the tram."

Says Mrs. Purflet, "Well, I do certingly enjoy a larf, but don't 'old with pickin' any one's pocket," as made me feel as she were the lady.

"Oh," says Miss Parminton, "it's all fair when any one is so ridiculous, and I can easy 'umbug 'er as it 'ave reached the Queen; and I owe 'er a grudge, and should like to get 'er into trouble, for she's dead agin the Claimint, and would turn smack round if he'd stand 'er a lot of licker."

I couldn't bear it no longer, but dashes open the door, and says, "If you don't give me back my property this instant, I'll 'ave the perlice."

Law! they did give a start up; and Miss Par-

minton she tried for to 'ide the letter, as she'd got in 'er 'and, under the table, and in so doin' knocked over the lamp, as were a parryfeen, as blazed up like wildfire, and all the room were in a blaze.

They screamed, and I screamed, and run to the door, and a lot of people come up from the kitchens, and some come a-runnin' downstairs, and werry soon put the fire out.

"Who done it?" says one man, as were the landlord.

"That old woman," says Miss Parminton; "give 'er in charge."

"No," says Mrs. Purflet, speakin' up, "it were a accidence, and that party 'ad nothink to do with it. But," she says to me, "take your letter and go."

I says, "That I will, with my umbreller too; and the next time I darkens your doors you shall tell me on it. And as to you," I says to Miss Parminton, "if ever I ketches you near my place, I'll give you sich a warmin' as you ain't 'ad this many a day, not since you was short-coated." So out I walks, and 'ome I goes, and took and burnt my letter to Queen Wictorier, cos, when I comes to think it over, it ain't fair, preaps, for me to say anythink one way or the other; and, in course, if I goes in one way for the Claimint, I did ought for to 'ear wot the little boy 'ave got to say for 'isself

—leastways, 'is ma, as might make a difference ; and if she was to take 'im about everywhere, and show 'im as the rightful 'air as other parties wanted to turn 'im out of 'ouse and 'ome, why, everyone as is a mother would feel for 'er and 'im too ; and no doubt would wote for 'im, cos they would say to theirselves, “ Poor little boy, if he don't get it, 'owever is he to live ? ” But thro' bein' a lady, 'is ma ain't likely for to do it, not if they was to pay 'er expenses, with all the best of dinners, and Members of Parlyment into the bargin, as did ought to be a-mindin' their own busyness, and not go in for one side nor yet the other, jest the same as the Judge, as, in course, don't care which side wins so as it's right in the end, as is my way of thinkin'.

So, wotever I may say or do, it won't be no under'and ways like music 'alls and sichlike, but only thro' a-talkin' on the quiet, as might come to a juryman's ears afore he'd made up 'is mind, as in course didn't ought to be prejudiced, as is agin their oaths, and mightn't like bein' locked up all night along with the Judge.

As tho' pleasant company, no doubt would keep 'em in order, and ain't allowed to go to bed, nor yet take no nourishment, escept, preaps, a sandwich case and a flat bottle, as ain't much among twelve, with your wife and family a-waitin' supper,

with a nice 'ot roast fowl and sassiges, or a couple of ducks, as makes your mouth water to think on ; not as that did ought to make you go agin your conshence, and swear away any one's life, leastways their livelihood, as is much the same thing, when you comes to think on it.

So, as I were a-sayin', if Queen Wictoria was to ask me, like a sister, which did ought to 'ave it, I should say in a minnit, "Please yer Majesty, the right man in the right place is my maxim, as the sayin' is, and none of your round 'oles and square pegs as won't never fit ; but," I says, "the fust thing as you've got to do is to settle this 'ere Licker Law, for you won't 'ave no peace till you do."

For I'm sure I ain't one for to stir up a gen'ral rebellion as might end in bloodshed with a civil war ; but all as I've got for to say is, if there ain't riots over this 'ere Licker Law, why, then, preaps all the world will go mad agin over this 'ere Claimint.

I certingly ain't a-goin' to give 'im no more of my time nor money neither, as looks on that there bond as I bought as good as money lost, which tho' only a trifle, might 'ave 'elped some deservin' object, so shall wait for the hend, as is put off to April, and then we shall know, for there's no tellin' which way the law will go ; and for my part, if I'm county courted for anythink, I shall pay the money,

tho' false; for, as I says, if a waggerbone will take and swear as you owes 'im money when you don't, depend on it he'd as soon swear your life away; and, in course, if it comes to your money or your life, as the sayin' is, why, you'd give the money, in course, tho' some 'ave been knowed to take both for fear you should tell.

Tho' in a gen'ral when 'ousebreakers they wears a mask, I've 'eard say, the same as a 'ighwayman on 'Ounslow 'Eath, as did used to stop the mails, and got gibbeted at last for their pains, and did used to 'ang in chains all along the road.

I do 'ope as next time they tries that Claimint as they'll let me ask 'im a few questions jest on the quiet, as I'm sure I could bring it 'ome to 'im, whether right or wrong, thro' 'avin' 'ad them as belonged to me go to sea and never be 'eard on no more, and can't tell whether it's been a shark or the course of natur as 'ave swallered 'em up.

But no doubt he'll 'ave all 'is friends over from Horstralier, as 'll be able to tell us when they see 'im fust.

Not as a man need go to sea never to be 'eard on any more; for I well remembers 'earin' tell of a party as were in the brush line in the Strand as went out atween the lights one winter evenin', and never come in to 'is tea nor nothink, tho' 'is good lady set up three nights runnin' for 'im, and then

give 'im up for lost, and kep' on the business over five-and-twenty years for the sake of the fam'ly ; and one day he walked into the shop agin as cool as a cucumber, as the sayin' is, and wouldn't never tell where he'd been, not to the day of 'is death ; and then it were found out, thro' a little book in 'is pocket, as he'd been a-lodgin' jest oppersite in a garret, jest to keep a watch over 'is wife, thro' bein' that jealous, and a-thinkin' if anythink 'appened to 'im she'd settle agin with the oilman at the corner, as were the last of 'er thoughts.

Not as he come back to claim anythink, for he weren't long for this world, and didn't live the week out, as might jest as well 'ave been a-livin' comfortable all them twenty years in the bussim of 'is fam'ly instead of a attic.

I do 'ope as this 'ere Claimint will prove wot he really is, so as any one may know who he is, or who he isn't, and that will settle it, 'cos, in course, if he ain't the right man, why he's the wrong one, as 'll put a stop to all this 'ere jawin', with fedin' and provin', as the sayin' is.

I must say, if he should turn up trumps, a many will be sold, jest as a many more will be if he shouldn't ; but, law bless me ! suppose he shouldn't be neither one nor the other ? Why, every one will be nonplushed, as the sayin' is.

I'm sure he did ought to provide for both Judge

and Jury, and pay all the witnesses 'an'some for their trouble, and the noospapers too ; and if he were to send me a trifle for a forget-me-not, as the sayin' is, why it's only wot he did ought to, when you come to think of the trouble as he've give me, let alone the espense, as the 'busses is a little fortin, not to say nothink of the clothes I've spilte, and wot with Miss Parminton's impidence, as I've 'ad to put up with, and other parties a-sneerin', and Brown a-callin' me all the old fools as he could lay 'is tung to for a-takin' of 'im up.

But, as I says, when my betters does, whyever shouldn't I ? Besides, it looks cold and 'artless, when any one's a-tryin' for to get their rights, to give 'em the cold shoulder, as the sayin' is ; not but wot I did ought to 'ave went and see the other side too, as would be fair play, to 'ave talked to that young widder, partikler as he's only a little boy, as will require care in bringin' up, and thro' me bein' that experienced might put 'er up to a thing or two, and am sure if I thought as she'd like, would 'ave called with pleasure.

But, law ! arter all, it 'll soon be forgot, which ever wins, and a many will suffer both sides, no doubt ; so I do 'ope as it may soon be put an end to, as 'll put 'im out of 'is misery, as must be merry aggrawatin', if the right man, for to know as he is, and can't get no one else to believe 'im, tho' some

does, and 'opes to win their money over 'im ; not as I'm over sanguinary either way myself, thro' 'avin' seen sich things as in my opinion is that puzzlin' as parties often 'ave 'ad to toss up, and then don't get the right.

I'm sure I don't know 'ow they're to settle it, unless they draws lots, like a shipwreck, for to see who they're to eat fust, a-driftin' on a raft for days and days ; but always thinks as I'd rather die myself than be eat up all of a 'eap like the Sangwich Ighlands, and I'm sure I could make up my mind for to die sooner than bring myself to eat a feller-creetur, partikler a sailor, as must be merry 'ard and salt, let alone the taste of tar, as I can't abear.

But we might jest as well eat one another up if we're a-goin' to be always a-tryin' to do one another out of our property, for property is property, and when Mrs. Martlett took and robbed my own aunt's bit of furniture, and wanted to put me off with a Britannier mettle teapct, a rushlight-shade, and a warmin'-pan, with some old bottles, and odds and ends, a-sayin' they was the old lady's effects wot she'd left be'ind ; and I shouldn't never 'ave 'ad my rights if I 'adn't gone over when 'er back were turned, and, thro' knowin' of the old charwoman as were takin' care of the 'ouse, got in and locked the door, and stood at the parler-winder a-defyin'

'er when she come back, a-sayin' to 'er as position were nine points of the law.

And so it proved, for she never got a rag, tho' she 'ad come over when she 'eard the old lady were a-dyin', and reg'lar settled on 'er, a-thinkin' to grab the lot, and would, too, but for me a-steppin' in, as were the rightful 'air ; as only shows it don't do to be too graspin', as you worry often over-reaches yourself, and gets nothink for your pains, as it's always best, in them disputes, for to square it, and not go to law. And no doubt, this 'ere Claimint would 'ave got somethink if he'd went on the quiet and told 'is story, as no doubt that family would 'ave done a somethink for 'im.

But, 'owever it ends, my conshence is clear, thro' 'avin' tried my uttermost for to make it up, cos I can't abear no rows in fam'lies ; as is wot I always says about Brown's sister Jane, let 'er come in welcome, but no rows over nothink, as a cup of tea and a bit of supper she's always welcome to, only, as I says, let me know, and not come on me like a load of bricks, a-takin' of me by storm, as the sayin' is, and preaps 'ad the sweeps, or the stair-carpets up.

But, as I says, the Claimint he've gone to work the rong way, some'ow, so 'ad better begin all over agin ; and, any time as he wants me, may see wot I thinks, as is my reasons for ritin', so as no-

body shouldn't say, "Ah! she knowed a deal, she did; and if she'd 'ave spoke out, might 'ave saved a deal of trouble both sides." But, as I always thinks, 'least said, soonest mended,' as the sayin' is; but it's my opinion as he certingly would 'ave proved it some'ow or another, and 'ave stuck to it, too, only he couldn't, as is the way with them lawyers. But never were more took aback when I see in the papers about 'is bein' up for contemp, leastways, Miss Parminton, she read it to me.

I says to 'er, "You don't never mean as they're a-goin' to 'ave 'im up for contemp of Court?" "Yes," says Miss Parminton, "and all as 'ave been a-helpin' 'im."

"Then," I says, "you'd better look out, for never 'ave I see anyone take 'im up more 'otter than you, as 'ave stuck to 'im like wax-end, as the sayin' is."

She turned that deadly pale as give me quite a turn, and says, "Oh! you base wile pergerin old woman, as wants to swear my life away, and 'ave me sent to the Tower for life."

I says, "Rubbish about the Tower, as is only for crowned 'eads, and decomposed suvrins; but," I says, "'Orsemonger Lane is about your size, now as the Fleet is pulled down, as is where my dear mother knowed a party kep' over thirty year fo refusin' to anser the Lord Chancelor a simple ques.

tion, as shows as them as says too little in this world is as bad off as them as says too much."

So she kep' on a sobbin' dredful over 'er supper beer ; and I says to her, " If I was you, I'd leave it, and take a little somethink 'ot afore goin' to bed"—a-knowin' as she were subjec to cramps, as I can feel for, with all 'er faults—and she took it, and pretty stiff too, tho' she did make a lot of wry faces over it.

I was a-stoppin' with Mrs. Padwick, through Brown bein' away, and my gal gone 'ome laid up with 'er 'ip quite, and really coals is sich a price that where you can save a fire, I do think as it's a dooty for to 'elp others with 'arf a sack, as is better than no bread, as the sayin' is.

When I got to bed, sleep I couldn't, for a-thinkin' as Miss Parminton and all the lot might be 'ad before the Judge any minit, tho' in course they all turned round ; and as to that deceitful old faggit Mrs. Whelpton a-darin' to say as she never 'ad stuck up for 'im, why I quite trembled for fear as it should bring a judgment on 'er, as 'ave got 'er mouth all drawed the wrong way, as she says were all thro' sippin' of 'er tea too 'ot, but that won't do for me, as 'ad a aunt like that as turned to creepin' palsy, as carried 'er off, tho' a good age, as I considers eighty-seven to be.

They may say wot they please about pig's fry

bein' a rich supper, and night-mares the consequence ; but it never wern't no common dream as I 'ad that night, as always were a fatal dreamer myself from seven-year-old, when I dreamt as the pipes 'ad bust in the 'ard frost, and woke up to see my dear mother a-balbin' out the best room with everythink as she could lay 'ands on, thro' the snow a-comin' thro' the roof, where two slates was off, and give that werry aunt of 'ern as were bed-ridden a cold as nearly carried 'er off twelve year before she did die.

But, dream or no dream, them words rings in my ears, "Martha Brown, you're to speak the truth, the ole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help"—

I says, "Stop, my Lord ; there ain't no occasions for you to forget yourself, and use such awful expressions," 'cos I knowed wot he were a-goin' to say, thro' its bein' the werry words as the pot boy 'ad used to me that werry same day, when I told 'im as he'd give me a bad shillin' in change with the one o'clock beer, as I took in myself, with the gal busy a-dishin' up the spare-rib, as were like chicken for tenderness, and Mr. Maltby, the milk man, 'ad let us 'ave as a favour, thro' 'avin' killed a pig as were all bespoke, and sent Mrs. Padwick a dish of fry as a present.

I can see that Judge's eye now when he says to

me, “ ‘Ow dare you go about givin’ your opinion over this ‘ere case.”

I says, “ Excuse me, my lord, but every Englishman’s ‘ouse is ‘is castle, as the sayin’ is, and all as I’ve said ‘ave been over a cup of tea often, as is sacred; not as I would mind a-repeatin’ wot I ‘ave said, as ‘ave always ‘ad that respect for the laws.”

“ Oh! you deceitful double-faced toad,” says Miss Pilkington, as were settin’ next the Judge.

I says, “ You’re a nice one to talk, you are. Why,” I says, “ my lord.”

“ Don’t ‘ear ‘er, my lord,” screams out Mrs. Whelpton, as come a-thrustin’ of ‘er face between me and the Judge.

“ Well,” says he, “ you ain’t forgot the onions among you, as must ‘ave eat a rope over your supper.”

Then I didn’t seem to ‘ear no more till the Claimint stood up, and says, “ I’m a persecuted lamb; as never did no ‘arm.”

I says, “ Self-praise ain’t no recommendation, my good man; and I’m sure nobody won’t find you guilty till you’re proved so. For if there is a thing as Queen Wictorier is more partickler about than another, it is not ‘avin’ parties ‘ung for wot they ‘aven’t done. And one can’t say as it’s a ‘ard law, leastways, not on ‘usbans, as only finds a man guilty of culpable ‘omerside, as kills ‘is wife with

frightful barberism, as they called it, and only got twelve years; so wot with that and 'is ticket, we shall 'ave 'im out and ready to kill another in no time."

I couldn't 'ear no more wot that Claimint said, 'cos he were a-sobbin' so; and no wonder, 'cos in course he 'ave got a tender 'art, or else he wouldn't never 'ave been in sich a 'urry for to go to Woppin', as is wot 'ave got 'im into all this trouble; and he must feel cut to the core, as the sayin' is, for to see 'is friends took to prison, besides a-payin' all that money; as I'm sure Miss Parminton never could pay, not if they took the bed from under 'er, as the sayin' is; as wouldn't be fair, 'cos it ain't 'er bed at all, now as she's a-livin' along with Mrs. Padwick.

Well, I shan't forget the 'orrors as I were in, a-thinkin' as I were left for death in the condemned cell along with the Claimint, as kep on sayin' as he would die game.

"Yes," I says, "and pretty 'igh game, too, my fine feller. But whyever should you have told 'em as I put 'you up to it, I can't think, as never set eyes on you but once, then could indemnify you arterwards through the crowd, and 'ave mistook more people for you than enuf."

He says, "You knows all about me, if you would but speak jest the same as parties as knowed me in the bush."

“ Ah ! ” I says, “ Why ain’t they ’ere, for a bird in the bush is worth two in the ’and ; and there’s lots of jail birds in the bush, no doubt, and long may they stop there, as I wish none on ’em ’adn’t never got away.”

He says, “ You kick me agin, and I shall ’ave to kick back.”

I says, “ You do, and I’ll give you a taste of my umbreller.”

He says, “ There you go again. Do turn round. It’s layin’ on your back that makes you so restless.”

I says, “ Where am I ? ”

“ Why, in bed, to be sure,” says a woice as I did seem to know, yet couldn’t make out.

I says, “ Oh, you willin’, ” and give sich a scream as woke me up, and there I was, sure enuf, in Mrs. Padwick’s four-post, and ’er a-settin’ up, as I could make out by the Child’s light, as burns in a sarcer on the mantel-shelf, as said she’d been tryin’ to turn me, as ’ad werry nigh kicked ’er out of bed twice with my groans, as seemed to come from my werry ’art.

“ Well,” I says, “ if this ’ere trial don’t come off soon, my life is a-goin’ to be a burden ; and if that there Claimint does get the day, he did ought to come down ’ansome to ’is friends, and not forget ’is hennies, as, though I am neither one nor yet the

other, yet shouldn't like to see justice done, as the sayin' is, as is wot I always says about a-goin' to see anyone 'ung. Why, it ain't no pleasure, though in course they richly deserves it.

So I says to Mrs. Padwick, "I wish you'd let me sleep on the sofy, for I feels reg'lar restless."

"Ah!" she says, "we 'ad too rich a supper."

"Why," I says, "I never touched the steak and onions!"

"No," she says; "but you 'ad a pretty good go in at the pig's-fry and bottled stout."

"Ah," I says, "you're right; it's that fixed hair as won't digest, so in course flies to the 'ead, and comes out in wishuns. But," I says, "things looks quisby for them as 'ave been a-goin' on with their defence fun, as they won't find no joke in the hend."

Says Mrs. Padwick, "Do try and go to sleep, that's a good soul; for I'm espectin' the sweeps by six, and it's near on one now."

So I said I'd try, and did drop off; but no rest for me, for fust I got a-dreamin' as the Claimint come out a reg'lar sweep, and were stuck in the chimbly a-tryin' to get up it, and me and Mrs. Padwick were a-pullin' at 'is 'ighlows to try and get 'im down, and got 'is heels in my chest for my pains, as was Mrs. Padwick a-kickin', through a-dreamin' as she'd been put on the rack, 'cos she

wouldn't tell the Judge where she'd been, and 'id Miss Parminton, as wouldn't say whether she'd ever see 'is tattoo marks, and put the Judge in a reg'lar rage.

"Ah," I says, "I'm glad you 'ave 'ad a dream over it as'll make you feel for others."

She says, "I'm that parched with 'ollerin' 'Elp' that I must get out of bed and get a drink of water."

I says, "Pray don't go to drink cold water in the dead of the night, as might strike to your chest."

She says, "I ain't afraid," and took and swallered two tooth-tumblers, as would 'ave been more than my life was worth to 'ave took a sip on.

Wot with them dreams, and wot with the sweeps, I reg'lar overslep myself, and didn't get down to breakfast till jest on nine.

Miss Parminton she'd been a-walkin' the room with 'er teeth all night, and 'ad 'er cheek swelled up like a 'east dumplin', and said as she'd not got a wink 'through espectin' as every sound were a knock to says as she were come for.

"Well," I says, "preaps the best thing as you can do is to plead guilty, and throw yourself on the mussy of the court, and get up a partition to Queen Wictoria, a-statin' as you didn't mean to do it, as would stand 'tween you and the Judge, as ain't got

no spite agin you, but only wants to do 'is dooty, and not be bullied and bally-ragged, as the sayin' is, by a parcel of outsiders ; and as for old Whelpton's 'at, I wouldn't give a straw for it, and as to 'im a-sayin' as he 'adn't no interest in the case, why he did ought to blush all over, and 'ide 'is diminish 'ead, as the sayin' is, as preaps is wot he wants that 'at for ; and as for my bond as I bought, I'll give it up with pleasure if they wants it agin the taxes or anythink like that, and wouldn't buy another not to please nobody, as I don't ever espect to see my money back, as it is."

Poor Miss Parminton she set all day a-shiverin' in 'er shoes, with 'er face tied up, and never knowed wot peace was till I took and fermented 'er face with poppy 'eads and camermiles, as give 'er ease within a 'our, as were a gumble as big as your thumb, and must 'ave all 'er stumps drawed I'm sure, as don't give no pain with larfin gas, not as ever I would 'ave clorryform myself, for nothink short of certing death as some operations is.

Brown he come 'ome that follerin' night, and he set us all to rights in no time, and give Miss Parminton comfort over that Claimint and contemp of court, through a-tellin' 'er as she was beneath contemp in the Judge's eyes, as would only punish them as did ought to know better. "But," he says, "if you're a friend of this man, wotever or

whoever he may be, you'd 'ave showed your friend-ship a deal more by leavin' of 'im alone, jest to take 'is course, 'cos it won't 'elp 'im a bit, for a parcel of old fools and young fools to go about a-sayin' as they're sure he's the right man, 'cos it's a pint as law must settle ; and if he can prove as he's this 'ere barrernite, there's a end on it. But it won't turn on wot parties thinks, or wot they says, or even 'opes ; but them as see 'im over in Horsetralier arter 'is shipwreck, they're the parties to say the word."

I never see anyone more closed up than Miss Parminton ; for she didn't keep on a-sayin' as they'd got the capting of the wessel as he were wrecked in, nor yet as there was a 'ole ship load a-comin' over as knowed 'im intimate in Horsetralier, as is wot she did used to be always a-dinnin' into your ears ; but she set there reg'lar mumchance, as mild as milk, as the sayin' is, with a woosted cloud round her 'ead.

So I says, " Well, then, we'll let it rest till April, when I goes to 'ear 'im tried."

Says Brown, " It's a pity as it ain't the fust of April, 'cos then you'd 'ave your right day."

" Ah ! " I says, " you may jeer, but I ain't a-goin' to give it up ; not as I ever 'ave said or mean to say, as they've got the right man, but I'm merry sure if he can prove 'issel to be the man,

he'll get the day, and the Judge 'll be the fust man to shake 'ands with 'im in the Docks, and so will the 'Turney-Gin'ral, as will 'ave been only a case of mistaken indemnity, as they calls it, as may 'appen to anyone the same as this 'ere Germin parsin, as 'ave made a good thing on it arter all ; but I do 'ope as them Germins won't make it a escuse to 'ave a war with us over it. 'Cos I 'ates the Germins. They'd be ugly customers, and give us a deal of trouble to kill 'em, as in course we should be obligated to if they wouldn't take warnin', and not come a-botherin' us, just 'cos the perlice 'as made a mistake, as anyone is liable to. And if parties will lead them desolate lives, why, it can't be 'elped if they comes to a violent end, though in course that's no escuse for murder."

So now I shan't say no more about the Claimint till I've 'eard 'im tried ; and if they should want a jury of matterns, I shall be one, and I will give the right man a leg up, whoever he may be ; for all fair and above board is my motter, whether right or wrong, infant or hadult, in the eye of the law, as the sayin' is.

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